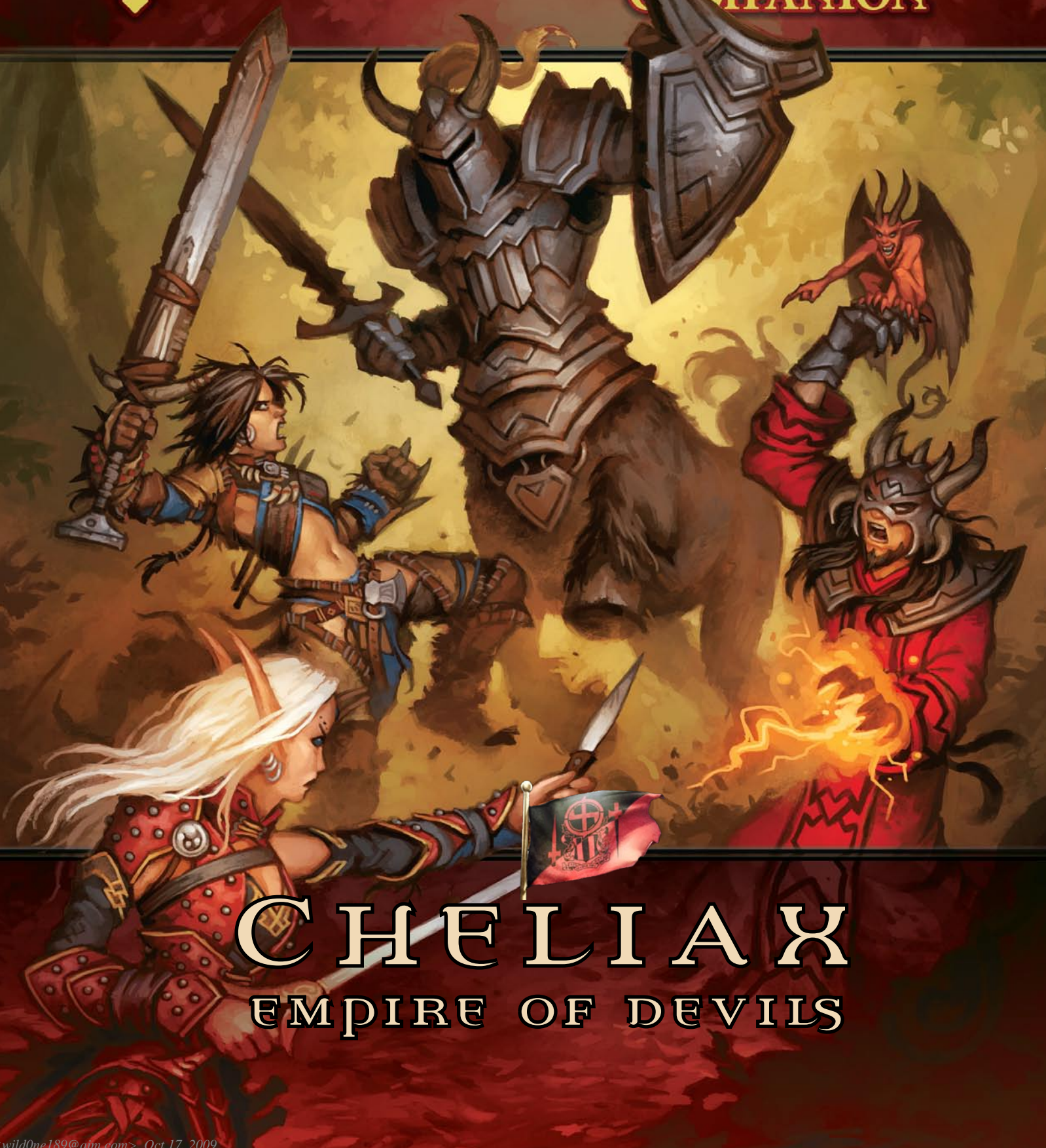


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# CHELIAX

## EMPIRE OF DEVILS

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Printed in China.



# CHELIAX

## IN THE THRALL OF HELL

Non-Chelaxians often ask the nation's citizens, "How could this have happened? How could you have let devil-worshippers take over?" Such questions betray a fundamental lack of knowledge of Chelish nature.

Cheliah has long imagined a central role for itself in the history of Golarion. For more than 500 years, it was the prime military and economic power on the continent. Its rule featured prominently in the Starfall Doctrine, which prophesied a time when the god Aroden himself would return to take the crown and usher in a new reign of peace and justice. Dreaming themselves to be the inheritors of grand destinies, the Chelaxians grew proud—arrogant,

even—and expanded their empire mercilessly in the name of their glorious fate.

It came as a great surprise to them when Aroden died. Desperate, the nation sought to hold onto its self-important stories and national mythology. How they found themselves under the heel of a different leader, Abrogail Thrune—who promised them the glory that Aroden's death destroyed even as she twisted the country away from its most cherished ideals—is a riddle to which few know the answer.

The darkness that swept the country after their god's demise nearly destroyed the Chelaxians. They were



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### UNDERSTANDING CHELIAX

The key to understanding modern Chelias is recognizing its need for power, and that if ever there were a concrete illustration of power's corrupting influence, Chelias would serve admirably in that role. For centuries, the people of this land have paid tribute to the notion that power in any form is the highest achievement in life. Even before the Thrune Ascendancy took shape from the chaos that surrounded the failure of the Starfall Doctrine, the people of Chelias believed in the goal of power for its own sake: military, economic, political, or magical.

This is what led to their downfall. When power becomes the goal, concerns about the way one achieves it fall by the wayside. It was only natural that some would seek to increase their power by supernatural means, and then by diabolical ones, and that once they achieved dominance, they would consolidate their standing by crushing their rivals and subjugating any who fell under their sway.

Those outside Chelias accuse the country's ruling class—and, indeed, any who seek standing in the country—of serving Hell. They point to the Hellknights, to the bloodsports, to the sanctioned worship of Asmodeus, and the increasing rigor and evil of the country as proof of their claim. But the Chelaxians maintain that their critics have it backward: *Hell serves Chelias*.

shattered and riven; 30 years of internecine warfare turned families against each other. Small tyrants arose, promising shelter from the increasing fury of the civil war, and were just as swiftly swept aside by ambitious underlings, crafty foes, and diseases that ravaged the country. Chaos reigned, uncertainty in every breath, and the dreams of Imperial Chelias were a golden memory of a time-that-was.

The wars grew steadily more vicious, and the would-be rulers of the country turned to increasingly desperate measures, until at last Abrogail Thrune struck a bargain with the darkest powers of Hell. Whatever pact she made that night was decisive: the hordes of Hell came to her aid, and the House of Thrune ascended to the throne of Chelias. Her family has remained in power ever since.

Since the Thrune Ascendancy, the country has known relative peace, but that physical peace comes at the cost of peace of mind, and perhaps the soul itself. Devils—most of them in the guise of mortals—roam to the very corners of Chelias, constrained by some force within the borders that the nation rightfully claims as its own; Hellknights and Asmodean Inquisitors enforce the law with brutal clarity and vicious efficiency; the noble houses engage in bloodsports and crush the lower classes for their

### A CHELISH GLOSSARY

The Chelish city-dwellers possess a wide vocabulary referring to titles, places, and specifics relating to their home, particularly in Egorian and Westcrown.

**Adel:** A small, personal barge

**Dottari:** The Westcrown city guard

**Durotas:** A captain of the city guard

**Duxotar:** Commander of the city guard

**Egorani:** A person or thing from Egorian

**Haloran:** A lantern-bearing staff

**Vaneo:** A Chelish manor house

**Vira:** A Chelish estate

**Wiscrani:** A person or thing from Westcrown

entertainment. The golden dream that was Chelias lives on, but in name only, and woe comes to those who dare to voice their discontent.

The Chelaxians have traded their freedom and their future for the promise of the lash.

### HISTORY

The assumption of power by the House of Thrune marked a major shift in Chelias's history—largely because so much of the nation's history has disappeared, erased from the archives and stricken from official records. The government in Egorian revises this history constantly, elevating allies of House Thrune and casting its enemies into darkness. Those who have offered significant insult to the queen, the nation, or the Church of Asmodeus find their names stricken from histories and legal documents, their existence erased from the birth and death rolls, their properties seized and granted to their rivals, and their families exiled, executed, or sold into slavery. Every third month, the imperial printing presses roll out a new, officially approved version of the histories for libraries, schools, and universities; the Order of the Rack retrieves the outdated copies from these same clients, with imperial sanctions for those who fail to produce their previously allotted copies.

The official histories are thus spotty and occasionally unreadable, with huge gaps from hasty excisions and the blotting-out of heroes who have fallen from favor. Although possession of unauthorized histories is a crime, it is whispered that serious scholars pay enormous sums for pre-Thrune volumes. An entrepreneur who managed to find a complete set of the revised histories, stretching from the birth of the Imperial Ministry of Historical Accuracy to the modern day, would find herself wealthy indeed—assuming she could find a client who was not an informant for the Ministry.

## SIGNIFICANT OFFICIAL DATES IN CHELISH HISTORY

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- 3007 Taldor founds its westernmost colony, Cheliah.
- 4081 Aspex the Even-Tongued, a Taldan governor, consolidates his power by marshalling the armies under his command and takes Galt and Isger under his control. His diplomats convince the winged men of Devil's Perch and the populace of Andoran to join his insurrection. This spells the end of Taldor as a great power, and seals Cheliah's fate as ruler of nations. The date is celebrated as *Signing Day* among the four nations; only the heretical winged men reject the freedom offered by Cheliah.
- 4137 The Chelish army and navy repel the forces of Garund and win control of the Arch of Aroden, allowing Cheliah to control the entrance to the Inner Sea.
- 4138 Ungrateful Sargava is founded.
- 4305 The glorious Everwar begins, demonstrating the Chelish desire to bring freedom and peace to the benighted savages of the north and east.
- 4338 Chelish conquest of Nidal is complete, opening a dialogue and mixing of ideas and trade.
- 4407 Loyal Korvosa founded.
- 4606 Aroden fails to fulfill his prophecy and abdicates his power, allowing chaos to descend on the land. A time of madness, darkness, and blood.
- 4632 Treacherous Molthune breaks from Cheliah, forsaking the motherland in her time of need.
- 4640 The House of Thrune consolidates its power, binding allies in Hell to quell the chaos and restore Cheliah to the path of greatness.

The basic touchpoints for the country's history remain constant, though as those who grew up under the Thrune Ascendancy age, they find the recorded versions of their memories have been officially altered. The battle for the historical soul of Cheliah is underway—someday the memory of Aroden's promise will disappear from Cheliah altogether, and Asmodeus will *always* have been the patron of Cheliah.

## SOCIETY

Outside of its borders, Cheliah is imagined by people across Golarion to be a place of twisted evil, its citizens cringing under the lash as devils torment them.

The reality is more prosaic. None deny that House Thrune's diabolic allies have had an effect on the kingdom, but Hell's influence is subtler than popular caricature would have it. Most of its citizens never see a devil—or at least never know they've seen one. Life goes on, much as it usually does, and if one has to be more careful when speaking his mind, or finds his neighbors disappearing at night while other neighbors become richer for speaking out against them—well, it's a small price to pay to beat back the dark hordes beyond the borders, isn't it? Chelish patriotism—or rather, nationalism—is loud and then louder; no citizens want to be noticed as being less vocal about their love of their country than their fellows, because that brings the eye of the Inquisitors.

The word to describe most Chelaxians is “ambitious.” The lower classes yearn to better themselves so that they can lift themselves from the muck of the ghettos and slums and live the life of the wealthy, free from care or want. The wealthy want to be wealthier; to acquire more power, more land, and more holdings. They want more responsibility, and they want to be seen, to make their mark on history and let the world know that they have trod upon its surface.

This ambition requires an outlet, and House Thrune grants it to them. Whether it's status-seeking, religious zealotry, vices, or blood, one can find it in Cheliah. (See *Recreation and Entertainment* for more information.)

## LEGAL STRUCTURE

The laws of Cheliah, called the *Asmodean Disciplines*, are based on the primary religious text of the Church of Asmodeus, and are thus byzantine and myriad, weaving in and out of one another like a tapestry. Prohibitions and regulations reach into every corner of life, and though most of these laws remain unenforced (some might even say unenforceable), they remain an effective way for Hellknights and more mundane police forces to remove undesirable elements from society: either as an exaggeration of a perceived violation, or as an incentive for ordinary citizens to report to the Inquisitors about their neighbors' suspicious activities.

The Inquisitors are a branch of the Church of Asmodeus. Their charge is to root out corruption and disease in the tree of the unholy in order to maintain orthodoxy in the Church. In their iron masks and black robes, they are the country's secret police, charged with creating and developing informants. Their network of spies stretches across the country, encouraged by rewards of coin, prestige, position, or influence. Thus it is that the citizens turn against each other in an atmosphere of incrimination, backbiting, and fear. This poison is most prominent in the cities, where few of the citizens know



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### THE OUTSIDE VIEW

As the nation's detractors see it, the highest members of Chelish society use the words "ethics" and "morality" frequently to keep the lower classes in line, implying that those who don't bow to their views are less pure, less devoted—less human. They urge their inferiors to live within the social boundaries established by the wealthy and the powerful, offering small rewards for those who comply and who inform on those who don't—and delivering terrible punishments to the people who refuse to participate in this rigged game. Small wonder that there are rumors of resistance to the rule of Hell and Thrune beginning in the slums and ghettos—and small wonder that the agents of Hell keep their eyes trained on the tenements.

their neighbors well; it is far less common in the smaller villages, where they keep a closer eye on their compatriots and issue their own brand of rough justice rather than draw the iron eyes of the Inquisitors to their homes.

Police and guardsmen, sometimes called *dottari*, are the primary law enforcement for each municipality. Some towns are small enough to require volunteer militias, rather than full-time enforcers. The law gives these city watchmen power only to protect, defend, and detain; the judges and lawmakers jealously guard their prerogative to hand down decisions of justice. The feared Hellknights technically exist outside of the legal system and Chelish control entirely, their charter approved by House Thrune itself, and may act as guard, judge, and hoodsman when they see a violation of the laws.

In the lesser towns, the mayor or headsman acts as the judge for the criminals brought before him. In the larger cities, the judges are both constrained by the law and freed by it. They are invariably clerics of the Church of Asmodeus, for they are the only people with the deep knowledge of the *Disciplines* required to understand the complexities of the law. In principal, they are incorruptible, above bribes and other temptations to alter the law: their reward comes from the power of the Lord of Darkness. In reality, as they are experts in the legal code, they know how to ask for and receive bribes, play favorites, and improve the lots of their friends—all under the blessing of the law.

Though the Inquisitors are charged with protecting against actual corruption (the breaking of the letter, rather than a violation of the spirit), it is rare that they investigate judges, and even rarer that they remove one. The most recent case was that of Alaster Wolfstongue, Senior Prelate of Kintargo, who was removed from office, defrocked, scourged across his face and back, and set loose in Devil's Perch to die. He did not die, the stories say—he

now dispenses justice and vengeance along the caravan routes, and has become a blight to the Hellknights and priests of Asmodeus.

The law constrains judges to sentences in accordance with the class of crime, allowing discretion for the severity of the crime and its effect on the city; the law provides a complicated formula for sentencing, but many of the lesser judges simply ignore these mandates rather than try to make sense of these complex if-and-but-otherwise statements.

Punishments range from censure, such as the stocks or branding, to excruciations in the city center. The Church prefers to avoid quick and private executions, except in cases of enemies of the state who must disappear efficiently and quietly. House Thrune believes that a public morning excruciation is a better deterrent to crime and revolt; its memories linger throughout the day, serving as a telling reminder of the perils of lawbreaking.

### SOCIETAL STRUCTURE

Chelias is primarily a feudal state, its society a pyramid reaching from the lowest classes to the royal house itself. Within each level, there are gradations and differences; not all slaves suffer the same fates, just as not all the wealthy possess the same holdings. In the cities, citizens guard their status jealously: the rich and powerful expect total deference from their inferiors, and this attitude trickles down the social ladder. It's not law yet, but it might be someday.

The base of the social pyramid is the slaves. The market for slaves is huge in Chelias: debtors, prisoners, criminals and scofflaws, unfortunates in the wrong place, and deposed nobility are all part of the vast slave network. The complex code of laws regarding slaves classifies them according to the sentence of their slavery, the terms of their release, and what sorts of tasks each may perform. Term-slaves, or those enslaved by order of the law for a set period, may not be executed or permanently disfigured, while life-slaves serve under the mercy of their owners. Slavers' practices vary across Chelias, as do their specialties; some, such as Valix Jeggare of Corentyn, hire bounty hunters to fetch specific types of slaves for the bloodsport arenas, while others, such as Oxophis Frangister of Westcrown and Egorian, roam the hallways of power in the capital, scheming to seize yet another of Chelias's ancient bloodlines.

Above the slaves are the serfs, who serve on the estates of the nobles, are given land to till or farm, and must provide a share of their yield to their local lord. They rarely travel, and almost never receive an education, and their world typically extends only to the borders of their lord's land. Although serfs have been known to rise to prominence

## HOW TO OFFER A BRIBE

Bribes are not illegal in Cheliax. In fact, the *Disciplines* specifically encourage it. The eponymous codex containing the nation's laws lays out a specific formula for offering and accepting a bribe to avoid punishment for crime or infractions, and failing to follow the proper steps can result in a significantly worse punishment than failing to offer one at all. Ironically, the charge for this is "attempted corruption of a public official." Officials taking bribes must pass a certain percentage to their superiors—withholding bribes results in serious disciplinary action.

The first step is determining how much the accused can pay. Certain crimes require a minimum payment to look the other way, and the most serious crimes—capital crimes, for the most part—are well beyond the reach of the lowest classes, though city guards may succumb to the temptation to take the highest inducement the accused can pay. Revolutionaries and radicals shriek that this system favors the rich and the powerful; ordinary citizens consider it the way things should be; after all, when they become wealthy, they want the perquisites that come with power (never mind that their chances of ever growing wealthy are slim to none).

The next calculation is how much to pay for the alleged offense, and to whom to pay it. Offering too little is insulting, though it can reduce the severity of the charges without making them disappear. Offering too much is considered a far graver insult to the officer or magistrate. Offering it to a Hellknight is an invitation to a beating.

Next comes the offer. One cannot simply throw money at an officer and walk away; this is a careful dance, delicately negotiated without saying the word "bribe." Offering to donate to the officer's favorite charity or simply asking the amount of the fine and then offering to pay it on the spot are the customary methods.

Be careful, though: some officers and magistrates find the offer of a bribe an insult to their integrity. Further, it is important to note that bribes are for crime and vice; offering an official a bribe to hurry government business implies that the government is lax and inefficient, and is a crime on par with blasphemy. Below are several common offenses and the recommended bribes associated with them.

Offense	Bribe
Public Lewdness	5 cp–10 gp
Breaking the Peace	1 sp–25 gp
Larceny (depending on severity)	5 sp–100 gp
Assault	10 sp–50 gp
Murder (depending on victim)	200–20,000 gp
Blasphemy	1,000–10,000 gp

(such as Hugh Fraxelles, who won his freedom and a title of his own by defeating 16 challengers in a row during the *Dies Irae* in Egorian 5 years ago), most of them are born, live, and die in the same 10 square miles.

Laborers of all kinds occupy the next social rung, whether they be carters, scribes, or servants to the wealthy. Some of them have educated themselves; most have not. They are free to move about the country, to seek their fortunes as they will, and to find new employers, their job contracts permitting. They rarely advance in the world, living in the slums and poorer districts of the cities, or as farmers or hunters in the hinterlands. Their entertainment is the taverns, vice dens, and the bloodsport arenas; they either burn to improve their lot or drown their ambition in drink and drugs to forget the sting of their failure to rise. Mercenaries and enlisted soldiers fall into this category.

Craftsmen and artisans sit above these, creating the goods that keep the economy moving. They have generally received some brief education—reading and writing to understand accounts and the tricks of their trade. They too are free to move as they like, insofar as their guild permits, but except in the case of itinerant craftsmen and tinkerers, they're frequently nailed down by ownership: mortgages and loans on their businesses and homes enmesh them in the body politic, with slavery or debtors' prison the punishment for walking away, and the Hellknights' Order of the Chain waiting for them to try.

The social betters of the craftsmen are the merchants, the guildsmen, and the advocates. They provide structure, community, and questionable services such as money laundering for the majority of the cash that keeps the economy moving. They are the first level of society for which Egorian is truly solicitous; their contributions to the public coffers and to the health of the nation are vital to keeping the nation and the Church afloat and solvent, and so the highest offices offer them the smallest voice in the direction of the country. They can be community leaders, and their influence may even be felt beyond their home, their street, or their city block. Military officers frequently come from this category or higher.

Then come the wealthy, those who have through one means or another achieved the measure of financial stability that allows them the time and leisure to invest, speculate, maintain multiple residences, involve themselves in politics or other risky ventures, and raise private militias. Their ambition is to make their households Houses of the Empire, with even greater status and power. They need muscle, they need brains, and they need people with the resourcefulness to carry out dangerous missions: it's well known among the



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adventuring classes in Cheliax that the ambitiously wealthy are the source of most employment.

The old nobility of Cheliax, most prominent in Westcrown, still commands vast holdings and some loyalty from the older members of the populace who remember the days before the Thrune Ascendancy. The families who have not yet proven themselves to the new queen, or those who do not show sufficient devotion to the infernal rule in Egorian, tend to congregate in Westcrown, slowly crumbling into eccentricity and dissolution. This group is a hotbed of strife: its members know how to play the political game, and the only thing that keeps them from banding together to rise up are the constant traitors in their midst who are eager to restore their families' good names in Queen Abrogail's eyes.

The new nobility in Cheliax arose only in the past 60 years, their fortunes tied intimately to House Thrune. The first among their number were those who had aided the house in its ascent through the bloody years of the interregnum, and they have swelled in the years since as each person, family, or group finds favor in Egorian. They earn their power through service to the Crown, vicious innuendo and brilliant politicking, assassination and espionage, or feats of strength in the arenas of the kingdom; they gain grants of land, secured from hapless old nobility, over which they may exert as much or as little control as they desire. They squabble endlessly among themselves, seeking to raise themselves higher and tear their enemies down in a zero-sum game in the courts of Egorian and Hell. Some of the oldest families of the new nobility are said to hold estates in Hell, with infernal titles to match. The lesser houses control the apparatus of government, populating the bureaucracy and filling out the vacancies in the Church.

The Church of Asmodeus and its functionaries sit above all of them, though their official position removes them from the hierarchy; the Church controls access to the queen, and thus to anger the Church is to bring the wrath of Cheliax to bear. Its clergy staff various portions of the governmental bureaucracy, control the courts, and help to create the laws that come before the queen for her approval. They also provide a more valuable service: exorcisms, bindings, and control of devils and other outsiders who have stretched the noose of Hell's restraint.



QUEEN ABROGAIL II

At the very apex of the pyramid is House Thrune, the largely uncontested rulers of Cheliax for over 60 years. The lineage of the house is not direct; various clans within it maneuver for power, seeking to place one of their own upon the throne, though they unite against outsiders who seek to move beyond the status of "pawn." The ruthless power struggles within the Thrunes have brought Her Infernal Majestrix Queen Abrogail II to the throne well before she was due to ascend. Though she is rumored to be immature, spoiled, and demanding, she is also one of the sharpest, most vicious political infighters the House has seen in decades. Her predecessors are:

- Antoninus, Abrogail I's son, who took the throne over Abrogail's bloody corpse;
- Antoninus's cousin, Terthule, who ascended when the king's *safu'u* fish was incorrectly prepared;
- Terthule's niece, Carellia, whose mysterious drowning has never been satisfactorily investigated;
- Carellia's cousin, Infrexus, who slipped under the ice on the Adivian River.

Rumor has it that Abrogail II re-bound the Courts of Hell to the contract signed by her great-grandmother, bringing the sharp eye of Asmodeus back to the realm in the person of the pit fiend General Gorthoklek. Those who have been in the court when he is present report that though he cloaks himself in human guise, the aura of power and evil emanating from him is overwhelming and unmistakable; they also say that Abrogail II seems entirely unaffected by his power, and that though he offers suggestions to her, it is clear that she is the one who controls the direction of Chelish policy. Indeed, they whisper, the devil reins in her worst impulses: Hell truly serves Cheliax.

Three primary groups exist outside the structure laid down here, though their members frequently adhere to decorum, politesse, and the demands of their superiors who play the courtier game in Abrogail's court: Hellknights, Inquisitors, and the monks of the various orders of the infernal church. They have the blessing and the authority to operate on their own charters, largely free of the interference of the normal engine of state, in order to create an outside efficiency control, to root out corruption, and to elevate the worship and devotion of Asmodeus to a purer form among their countrymen.



## FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND THE MILITARY

An Andoren joke asks, "How can you tell the difference between a Chelish traveler and a Chelish spy?" The answer? "Trick question—there is none."

This isn't strictly accurate, of course. Egorian maintains a vast and convoluted spy network, but not everyone traveling abroad is an agent of House Thrune. Indeed, many of the educated classes take time to travel to other countries, absorb their culture, and spread Chelish influence while they're there. Chelish travelers are usually quite recognizable by their smug self-importance and certainty of their status.

Cheliox's vast army and navy are among the largest in Avistan, and despite the decline of the Chelish empire, they remain a threat to every other country on the continent. The Chelish navy patrols the waters of the Inner Sea, and controls the Arch of Aroden (and thus one of the primary shipping lanes). The army likewise plays an outsized role in determining the fates of the countries surrounding Cheliox: it is its presence on the Chelish plains that keeps those nations in line, and its threat that keep Nidal and Isger friendly, Molthune in a state of constant readiness, Galtans wary, and Andoran's army mobilized at the borders.

Cheliox fetishizes its volunteer military and, to a lesser extent, its conscripted and enslaved military. Government-run printing presses report on their successes, minimize their failures, and praise the casualties as heroes who have given their lives and limbs to the service of the country. Those who have distinguished themselves on the battlefields can expect heroic treatment when they retire; the others, though lionized during their careers, find that their service is respectable only if they speak in favor of House Thrune. Those who dare speak of the horrors of war, or who question the latest military venture, find themselves shunned, maltreated, and driven into poverty, their names tarnished and their memories forgotten. Officially, they cease to exist, but rumor has it that some of them have gathered in Halmyris (or is it Longacre?) to begin plotting against the corrupt leadership that has broken the morale and spirit of so many of their comrades.

The Chelish military is a tool of the economic interests of the country. Though Egorian invokes the specter of enemies on the border and the necessity of defending Chelish interests and people (most especially the colonists of such far-flung places as Sargava and Anchor's End), the government uses the military to promote the merchants who trade in those areas and the houses they serve.

Two types of general staff and admiralty exist: those who work in the Ministry of War and advise the rulers of Cheliox, and those who are responsible for carrying out the orders, strategies, and placements suggested from

Egorian. In the field, General Arionus Dexter commands the armies of Cheliox from his fortress in the Fields of Chelam, and is said to be seeking scouts who can pass into Andoran with no trouble—Chelaxians who don't look or sound Chelish.

## INTERNAL TENSIONS

It's no secret that the country has changed dramatically in the past hundred years, and that the 30 years of interregnum and anarchy marked the Chelish character indelibly. Chelaxians have become closed and suspicious, and they reject outside influence in their lives, fearing a return to those terrible days. They regard foreigners with suspicion, and those who travel outside Cheliox—or even to far reaches within the land—become tainted with *otherness*. Chelaxians, especially those in small towns, put down deep roots, and many have an inherent mistrust of people who don't share those roots; when something goes inexplicably wrong, the rootless and the Other become the first people to blame. Frequently, Hellknights are all that stand between vigilante mobs and unsuspecting travelers.

In larger towns and cities, one sees far fewer mobs; the courts and the watch can take care of criminals and saboteurs, and they're fed a steady diet of both. Inquisitors and Hellknights conduct secret (and not-so-secret) pogroms against various alleged enemies of the state—revolutionaries, spies, malcontents, underground printers, and any who dare to question the established order. They have developed a ruthless efficiency for rooting out trouble, and have developed mass operations based on military movements that are calculated to move large quantities of people, equipment, and supplies long distances at short notice. Whether they move these quantities back when they're done is another matter altogether—such are the ethics of efficiency.

## RECREATION AND ENTERTAINMENT

It has been said that, in Cheliox, anything not forbidden is permitted, and the government recognizes that its citizenry requires ample space to shake off the tensions caused by the ever-present regulations and laws. This space, of course, is vice. In most cities outside Cheliox, vice hides in back alleys and away from respectable, gods-fearing citizens. Not so here. In this land, the government owns many brothels, drug dens, gambling houses, and theaters, which stand glittering. These draw in the wealthy and their guests, who mingle in the fleshpots and the cathouses, watching the degradations of their friends and neighbors, few of them ever realizing their own souls are as besmirched.

Egorian regulates vice and taxes sin. Brothel owners must pay monthly licensure fees and open their books to government investigators. Drug dens pay a percentage



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of their intake, and gossip says that half the addicts are government informants listening for loose words and secrets spilled. Some proprietors try to skip out on their actual allotments, attempting to hide their businesses for whatever reason—but when they're discovered, they pay back taxes or exorbitant bribes, and frequently go before the courts. Easier, then, to go through the hassle of the bureaucratic process, purchase inspection permits and licenses, and conduct all this business openly.

The poor have their entertainments as well, less officially sanctioned but still legal under the Asmodean code. Theirs are more brutal, less refined, and their victims less likely to stagger home after the night's end. The blood-spattered fighting pits of the tenements and ghettos see any number of prizefights—from cockfights to more exotic creatures, bare-knuckled boxing to all-out death matches—which generate real income for the owner of the beast or the winner of the bout, up to 20 gp nightly. In Ostenso, would-be gladiators are advised to ask for Warrant Officer Tarantil Veser at the Six-Eyed Mute; she's got wide knowledge of the best matches for the upcoming week, and can arrange impromptu bouts within a few hours.

The diversions of the wealthy can be both more refined and more horrifying. In addition to many conventional and renowned opera houses and theaters, Cheliah's nobles also have something they call the Theater of the Real. For the high-minded and the intellectual, this is an exercise in stripping away the true nature of humanity to connect them to their primal selves, a way to open the sheltered to a transgressive revelation of the human condition. To less cultured theatergoers, these are snuff plays featuring violence, blood, and gruesome ends perpetrated on the unwitting or sacrificial victims—a way to indulge bloodlust without having to rub elbows with the lower classes. In Egorian, the most famous of these theaters lies in Devil's Dance, in a place called the Cowering Slave, its proprietor a former priest named Tusco Felone.

The current gossip is that a new anti-government movement has arisen that takes elements of the Theater of the Real and combines them with revolutionary sensibilities: by kidnapping the families of local authorities and forcing them to participate—though masked—on stage in these voyeuristic spectacles, the radical new troupes hope to force an end to the Real.

### ART IN CHELIAH

In addition to theater, other arts also thrive in Cheliah; people need an outlet and inspiration, and life in Cheliah provides plenty of the latter. In sculpture, the latest fashion is the Egorian style, a brutal form of jags and spikes that asserts dominance over its surroundings through sheer power and presence.

The dominant painting style now could best be described as realistic, though the themes are decidedly supernatural and infernal: either depicting the leadership of Cheliah in positions of dominance over the Courts of Hell, or denigrating their political enemies.

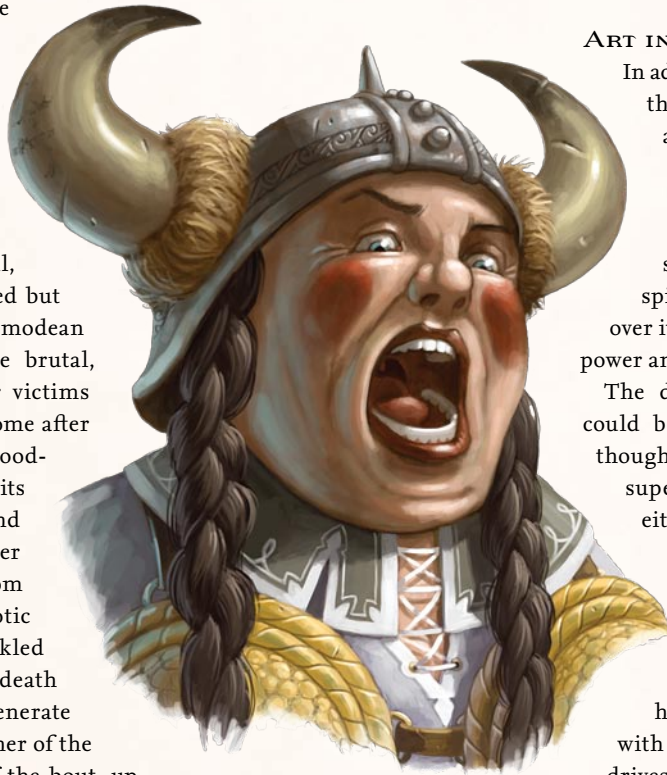
The latest music is both harmonious and disturbing, with sudden, harsh, and rhythmic drives punctuating and puncturing the eerie melody. The chamber orchestra

Five-Edged Square has been experimenting with different instrumentation, their latest affectation being woodwinds and strings made from the bones and organs of dead radicals.

Finally, a new movement is emerging, spurred by the monks of the Third Stone Abbey in the eastern Menador Mountains: the New Ascetic, devoted to stripping out the inessential in art to focus on the bare truth. Asmodean Prelate Astrid Consain calls this a deviation from the complex interweavings of Hell, and is pushing to have the practitioners of the art chastised, but the movement continues to grow.

### GEOGRAPHY

To understand the people of Cheliah, one must understand the land, for the character of the land shapes the character of its people. There are six primary Chelish regions, most divided into smaller duchies, earldoms, baronies, counties, and smaller fiefdoms claimed from the old nobility.





### THE REBELLIOUS WEST

The first of these regions is the mountainous west, where the jag-toothed hills of Devil's Perch protect the town of Pezzack—home of winged seditionists who resist the rule of the Imperium—from the Chelish army. The fliers protect their territory jealously, and those travelers who cannot give the proper sign and countersign are turned away—bloodily, if need be. Outside of the winged men's mountains, the Western Lands extend from the Sallow Coast, near Mount Spire, all the way down to the Pillars of Anferita, at the mouth of the Maiestas River.

The people of the West are suspicious and dour, but of all the Chelaxians, they are the most free-spirited. Nestled behind the peaks of the westernmost Menador Mountains, they have a long history of resistance to outside rule. The ruins of the city of Naronia in the southern part of Hellmouth Bay attest to this; unlike Pezzack, its residents never returned when the Chelish navy destroyed the place. The towns are small and hardscrabble, with numerous bolt-holes, hidden paths, and weapons caches and food stores dotted throughout the hills.

The ruler of the west is nominally Paracount Marcellus Thurivan, but he sees his days are numbered. If he cannot subdue his unruly subjects soon and convince them to offer their tithes and taxes, he will be summoned to Egorian and replaced. He is preparing a last-ditch military response—with a devil on loan from House Thrune—to bolster his governance from his home in Belde on the eastern side of the mountains, and rumor has it that he would rather exterminate the people than see them turn away from Egorian yet again. The rebels of the Western Lands may need allies to stand against this final push.

### THE COSMOPOLITAN NORTHWEST

North of the Devil's Perch region lies the Ravounel Forest, the North Plains, and Kintargo, the Chelish city most exposed to outside influence: it sits on Nisroch Bay at the mouth of the Yolubilis River, unprotected by mountains or other natural barriers from those who might seek to take its wealth for their own. Kintargo's people are less insular and more open to the outside world, and the Asmodean religion's influence is far less keenly felt among them.

This is not to suggest that the Church has no say in the city. The city is a major port, after all, and many ships of the Chelish Navy put in here; their commanders are largely ardent advocates of the regime in Egorian, and they enforce the desires of the Church hierarchy. The mayor of Kintargo, Jilia Bainulus, accedes to their wishes when the navy's warships are in the harbor, and removes the restrictions when the ships sail out—there's no point, she says, in depressing the area's economy with all that

nonsense. It's only a matter of time before she's replaced with someone more obedient.

The towns of the North Plains, bordering Nidal, are low and face east, away from the wind that blows cold from the Arcadian Ocean. The rains that sweep in across the prairie turn to ice and sleet in the winter, transforming the plains into vast and pitiless tundra. Halflings live among the rolling hills and vales, hiding their settlements from the scouts and merchants who travel between Kintargo and the Uskwood—for who knows what evils these travelers bear back and forth?

The Asmodean keepers of Ravounel Forest have begun reporting strange creatures in the wood; the worshipers of Erastil, most especially the ranger-priest Triadan Freedman, have kept quiet, saying they don't know a thing, but rumors of Rovagug's cult have begun to surface, and there may be a power struggle brewing in these rough woods.

### THE RIGHTEOUS NORTH

The word that characterizes the people of the north is "devotion." It refers not necessarily to the worship of Asmodeus or holding to the edicts of Egorian, but rather the devotion necessary to hold a mountainous border. These Chelaxians are the very image of tough and ready, it is small wonder that many Hellknights have come from the small towns that line the base of the northern Menador Mountains. They are unforgiving because the land is unforgiving; they believe in law because deviating from best practices in the mountains leads to death.

In addition to the trappers and hunters of the area, the mountains hold significant mineral deposits. The mountainsides are latticed with mines, and work camps spring up around the shafts of each. This brings the slavers, who in turn bring their thralls—and the slave pits of the north are legendary. Thousands of prisoners serve the miners outside and enter the most dangerous areas of the mine. These latter are frequently term slaves, serving out their time in ways that are often fatal. For those who seem to be in danger of surviving what the mines have to throw at them, the many slave owners have a bustling side business populating the impromptu fighting pits and amateur arenas for the miners' entertainment.

In any place where slaves are gathered, of course, there are slave revolts and fugitives. In the hills near the headwaters of the Jeni River, the hills are honeycombed with warrens and caves into which slaves vanish, going on to hold their new homes with a ferocity that astonishes even hardened soldiers. Gossip has it that their leader is a woman whose family the government erased. House Napaciza, the famed archers of Chelias, have sent some of their best trackers and bowmen to the hills to eliminate the slaves. There's

## CHELIAX: EMPIRE OF DEVILS

a story in there, but Narikopolus won't confirm that their enemy is the last scion of the family that used to rule the city of Kantaria, where Narikopolus rules now.

Kantaria, just north of the Barrowood, is the only city of note in the region. Its lifeblood consists of trade in minerals and slaves from the mountains, merchant caravans, and shadow-masters from Nidal traveling to Egorian.

The marble-lined pool of St. Ilnea's Fountain sits in a rock-ringed vale along the southern wall of the Menador Mountains, just to the west of the rough-and-tumble trapper town of Taggun Hold. The first saint of Iomedae, Ilnea was a gentle, pious woman who became a warrior by necessity, rather than by choice. She acted as Iomedae's squire before the Test of the *Starstone*, and helped to establish the earliest orders of the faithful. As she traveled through Chelias to marshal more forces against an incursion of demons, she was set upon by brigands led by the foul demon Karash'e'tor the Black. She slew the demon, but died of her wounds in this vale. Her body disappeared into the earth, and the spring rose a day later.

Every year on Rova 19, the Day of the Inheritor, and Lamashan 6, Ascendancy Day, the fountain shimmers and gouts hundreds of feet into the air, and all who stand under the spray are said to receive the blessing of St. Ilnea. This blessing is reputed to be a ward against demons, and to heal curses and wounds delivered by evil creatures.

### THE HEARTLANDS

The vast central plains of Chelias and the two major forests of the interior comprise the Heartlands. The land is broad, the sky is large, and mighty rivers flow from the mountains and the woods into Lake Sorrow, on which sits the capital city Egorian. From Dekarium on the east of the Barrowood to Longacre at the west of the Whisper Woods lie the Fields of Chelam, a fertile, rolling plain filled with farms and small trade towns.

The Whisper Woods, they say, holds an unclosed gate direct to Hell, through which the creatures of the Pit can come and go as they please. Paladins of Iomedae have vanished into the wood searching for the gate, and at least two pariahs of the Order of the Gate have lost their commands seeking to close it down. Thus it is that the Hellknight Order of the Pike protects the western edges of the wood, hunting down any of the creatures that seek to stray beyond the wood's borders. They've posted a reward for bounty hunters and adventurers to help them: those interested should apply to Master of Blades Tolsis Ruvadorn in the order's citadel in Senara. Rumors abound as to why the Hell-allied House of Thrune wants this gate closed.

The Whisper Woods also hold the Scar Thicket, one of the reputed entrances to the Darklands, just east of the Pillar of Palamia. The pillar is said to be a monument

to a forgotten god, or perhaps its prison, nailed into the ground here, the wound the entrance itself. The thicket is full of huge insects and other, more exotic creatures (many of which fetch handsome rewards if one can lure them to the fighting pits of the city); most who enter this place never emerge again.

The roads across the Heartland lead inexorably to Egorian, whose spires reach grasping fingers to the sky. If a traveler approaches the city from the east, then well before the city's limits she'll come across the Slave Citadel, a huge chain-walled pen that holds thousands of poor souls. It's a prison and a way station for the slaves passing from the city's docks to their eventual fates in some remote corner of Chelias, or for those coming in to serve under the pleasure of the noble houses.

In the Barrowood—rumored to be so named because it stands sentinel over the graves of the many would-be tyrants of the interregnum—the trees run thick and deep. It's a vast forest, said to hide secrets that hold the key to Chelias. Most especially, in the southern reaches of the forest sits the Winter Grove, a blackened, ancient, ruined druid's grove that dates to before the days of the Taldan Empire, when Chelias was merely a western frontier. In the heart of this grove, there is said to be an ancient summoning circle, and it is from this circle that Abrogail I made her infernal bargain with the Prince of Darkness. In recent years, locals have spotted royals making frequent, if secretive, pilgrimages to the site, always bringing sacrificial victims with them. Whether they seek to appease Hell or to increase their own power, none can say.

### THE BULWARK OF THE EAST

To the east, the Aspodell Mountains and the River Keld stand as barriers against invasion, with the cities of Misarias and Brastlework to hold armies fast until reinforcements can march across the Fields of Chelam or the Sirmium Plain to protect the nation. As the east is the most accessible land route—mountains block the north, the sea the west and south—the Chelish army keeps the great bulk of its forces in the area. The region is largely on a military footing, and great citadels loom over the plains, ready to discharge their forces.

Farms mark this land, a huge sea of maize, wheat, oats, and barley; cattle ranches and pig farms take up the rest, and in the fall, the animals are driven to market—sometimes locally; sometimes across the country to Egorian, where the cityfolk pay premium prices for them; and sometimes to Andoran or Isger. The army remains their best customer in the area.

The cities of the east include gnomish Brastlework at the head of the Brastle River; Lackastel at the other end of the river, the first port for the ships that don't want to stop



at Ostenso and a market destination for the farmers of the Sirmium Plain; Misarias, the town bordering Isgar and waypoint for thieves, diplomats, brigands, and scouts; and of course Ostenso, the home of the great Chelish navy.

Rumors suggest that priests of the Church of Asmodeus disguised as hunters, trappers, and itinerants wander the exact line of the eastern border, burying and replanting tiny figurines, idols of the courtiers of Hell, as if they were marching an army to the east. What purpose this serves is still unknown, but third-hand accounts have it that intrepid souls who unearth the idols have died horrible, screaming, fiery deaths.

The architects of Brastlework are currently moving their operations eastward, to help build fortifications against the Andoren army. A massive wall is going up, from the base of the Aspodell Mountains down to Aspo Bay, filled with emplacements and only a single, enormous gate. Cross-country merchants are protesting the so-called Aspodean Wall, saying that their goods will rot if they have to trek so many more miles before they can cross the border into Andoran to trade, but the military planners have so far ignored their petitions.

### THE SOUTHERN COAST

The southern border is the Inner Sea, stretching from the Arch of Aroden in the west to the Bay of Deng in the east, where the earthquake- and typhoon-ruined city of Deng, brought low by the death of Aroden, overlooks the cape.

The Imperial Navy of Chelias, with major ports in both Ostenso and Corentyn, floats one of the largest fleets on the Inner Sea, a force that provides more than enough protection against the depredations of would-be rivals. The cities of the Southern Coast are tall and walled on the landward side, and rise on cliff sides and bluffs against the winds and swells of the sea. Though the Chelish navy is strong and nearly unbeatable in these waters, pirates, smugglers, and shore-hugging brigands dare the wild seas and churning currents to make encampments all up and down the coastline.

The cities of the Southern Coast include Corentyn, Macini, Hinji, Halmyris (not technically on the coast but still considered part of the Southern Coast), Remesiana, and Westcrown. Westcrown is an aristocratic preserve, a menagerie of the old nobility, where they can pretend to hold to their power and the new aristocracy can come to see their downfall if they don't toe the line.

Fishing villages dot the coastline, from east to west, subsisting on the hauls of the Inner Sea and trading to the cities. They also hide crews of "wrackers," murderous fishermen who lure night-traveling ships onto treacherous reefs and slaughter the survivors in order to salvage the cargoes aboard.

The dead of the city of Deng rise up under moonlit nights and walk their old lives again, as if they'd been interrupted in their tasks. Some of them have become more aware, and reenact the moments of their individual tragedies endlessly or weep unliving tears for the death of their god. Some are said to seek life again, and legend has it that they protect a treasure hidden in the heart of the old City Hall.

### ORGANIZATIONS

For the few chaotic and individualistic people left in Chelias, the rigid imposition of power cries out for expression from those who labor under it. In Egorian, they say "stepping in waste spreads it out"—it's still there, just hiding in awkward places where you don't notice it until later. Either way, numerous organizations have grown under the rule of the Thrunes. These are some of the more notable and famous across Chelias; there are other, smaller groups who operate locally or more clandestinely (such as the Aspis Consortium).

The first of these are the **Hellknights**. Though the Hellknights are not officially part of the hierarchy in Chelias, they have a charter from the Queen certifying their rights, duties, and responsibilities to the law. Their citadels cover the land, from north to south and east to west, so that they can enforce the law. Contrary to popular depiction, many—even most—of the Hellknights are not evil; this is especially true of the lower-level Hellknights, whose exposure to the world has not yet embittered them to the criminals occupying it. Instead, like most Chelians, they strive for order in an imperfect world, choosing to model their organization and their methods on the armies of Hell in the belief that the social contracts of civilization are too tenuous to survive mercy. Further, the longer they spend as law enforcers, the more often they see the law broken by all manner of folk, leading to an inherent mistrust of people, which itself gives rise to harder hearts.

The **Inquisitors**, the country's secret police, have the authority of the Church of Asmodeus and the tacit blessing of the nobility. They are the law's appointed protectors, and the best way to avoid their notice is to avoid breaking the law. Of course, given the nature of the law, this is nearly impossible. Most people suggest keeping one's head down and going about one's business to avoid drawing attention.

The repressive atmosphere breeds its malcontents, naturally. **Resistance groups**—freedom fighters, rebels, or terrorists, depending on your position—sprinkle the breadth of the country, no matter how hard (or maybe because) the government brings its infernal forces to bear. These groups hide in every region, city, and town, hoping to provoke a broader uprising against the Thrunes and their allies. It's said that some of these groups even have

## CHELIAX: EMPIRE OF DEVILS

### ECHOES OF NOBILITY

Adventurers who grew up in Westcrown, particularly those who have family still in the crumbling city, show it in their personality. Many are descended from the old nobility (as worthless as some of those titles may be) and bear the weight of their family's hopes: recovering a lost family fortune, restoring a good name, or rebuilding an empire. Some have nothing left of their heritage but stories of lost glory, and nothing to direct their endeavors but burning pride and a desire to claim their birthright. Others choose to ignore their history, though they seem to live in shadow, tormented by dreams of the past and haunted—sometimes literally—by the shades of their ancestors.

Westcrown natives generally bear some mark of their heritage: an old signet ring, encoded documents without a cypher, a key to an unknown lock, or a battered but beautiful dagger. Though they may not know the significance of these heirlooms, most believe the items will show their importance at some point.

angels advising them, envoys from beyond the mortal sphere, here to help humans throw off the shackles of Hell—but once a group out of Remesiana trusted such an angel and followed it the very gates of Egorian to thrust their knives into the queen, only to have the creature throw off its disguise and reveal itself as an erinyes devil. This ploy alone has helped to foil too many would-be regicides to count. Anonymity breeds confusion, and this plays to Egorian's advantage.

In Westcrown, the **Westcrown Shadow Hunters** pay good coin for hunters of the shadow beasts that plague their crumbling city. Led by a masked woman called "Bluehood," who is rumored to be a scion of the city's old nobility, the Shadow Hunters are trying to clean the city of the fell creatures that were supposedly loosed here decades ago by unscrupulous Nidalese sorcerers. There's a tavern near the old Leroung estate where bounty hunters can drop their kills, and someone will bring them a bag of gold the next night.

The **Molthune Armsrunners**, a group of mercenaries operating out of Logas in Isgar, bring in shipments of high-quality arms from out of the country. Whether they're being controlled by Andoren paymasters, obeying Molthune's governors, or doing it of their own accord, nobody truly knows. Rumor has it the weapons go to rebels and nobles alike. The Armsrunners supposedly smuggle infernal weaponry back to Molthune, Andoran, and Galt. Their agent is said to keep rooms in Misarias when they're looking for guards, customers, or scouts in Cheliax.

In the Aspodell Mountains, high among the sheer cliffs and snowy crevasses, lies a monastery, home to the

### THE HELLFIRE REDEEMER

The legend goes that when Her Infernal Majestrix Abrogail I rose to power, a devoted knight of Sarenrae and his companions mounted an assault to destroy her and her fiendish allies. When they breached the throne room, they found themselves stunned by the unholy beauty of the Majestrix, who enspelled the knight and forced him to cut down his allies. As the blood mingled on the knight's blade, the longsword turned pitch black, with swirls of red seething beneath the surface. Abrogail commended her new champion and declared him the first Hellknight.

This legend is totally unsupported by history; no scholar has found evidence that the story is true (and in fact the Hellknights predate Abrogail's time as queen). None can even find the name of this supposed "first Hellknight" or his eventual fate. From time to time, though, this weapon surfaces, carves another memorable place in folklore, then disappears again. The *Hellfire Redeemer* typically reveals itself to good folk in their time of greatest need. It supposedly causes black rot to spread through its victims whenever it strikes, ignites enemies with a command, and sucks the souls of the fallen into its blade. To wield the sword is to truck with the legions of Hell, and most stories tell of it corrupting its bearer.

**Children of the Upper Reach**, devoted to Iomedae and the study of a martial art developed to combat the dangerous *hamatulatsu*, another fighting form patterned on the study of barbed devils employed by the rival Sisters of the Golden Erinyes in Isgar. Based on the fighting styles of Melek Taus, vanished archon of Heaven, it is called *melekatha*, and is a soft art consisting of dodges, holds, and strikes that turn the attacker's energy upon the aggressor. The abbess, Helsan Torvill, has not yet sent a ritual challenge to the Sisters of the Golden Erinyes, and so they have not yet determined which art is stronger, yet that day surely draws closer.

In Hiji, a new hallucinogenic drug has taken hold of the lower classes: "ice tears." Said to be distilled from the blood of daemons bound into captivity in some wizard's lair, it brings feelings of great power, and seems to grant its user the ability to resist cold for hours at a time—and people from the user's past and future slip into and out of his vision. Whether these are purely mental effects or actual changes wrought by the drug, it has become increasingly popular among the fishermen who brave the sea. They say that ice tears come from Katapeshi smugglers who hug the shores all the way from their Garundi homeland; others suggest it's a homegrown industry. Either way, a shadowy group calling itself the **Sons of the Tear** now appears to be in charge of supplying it. As the usage of the drug is growing and spreading, people are starting to grow concerned.



# EGORIAN

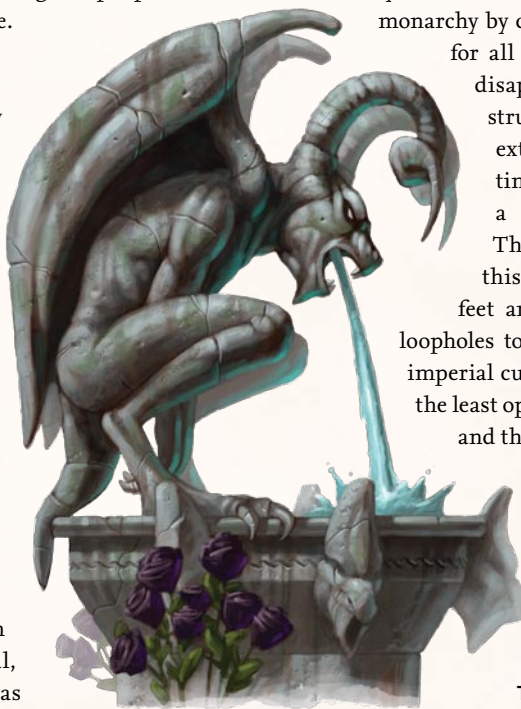
**K**nown as the City of Thorns, Egorian is the heart of the Chelish nation, the home of the Thrice-Damned House of Thrune, and—according to ignorant foreigners—the closest place to Hell on Golarion. While the influence of the infernal is obvious, Egorian is actually much like any other bustling city, with its share of nobles, slums, and regular people just trying to put food on the table.

## HISTORY

Egorian spent much of its history as a small fishing and trading city, hugging the edge of Lake Sorrow. As first Taldor, then Chelias rose to be the dominant power of western Avistan, Egorian rose with it, becoming a major trading hub. Until the Thrune Ascendancy, Egorian was Chelias's second-greatest city. With the establishment of the new order, Egorian achieved its current place as the capital and true center of the empire.

Before the Ascendancy, Egorian was a typical Chelish city with twisting, organic roads. When Thrune made it the new capital, one of the first things they did was embark on an urban renewal program to remake the city in a more orderly image. They added a 20-acre plaza, Thrune Square, right in the middle of the city, and built four giant boulevards (the Prospects) straight out from the square, one in each cardinal direction, without any regard for the existing layout of the city.

The result is countless intersections where the new streets intersect the old at odd angles. The West, South, and East Prospects even pierced the outer wall, and great gatehouses were erected for these new roads. The government plans to slowly rebuild the entire city in its image, and has made some small progress just west of Thrune Square, where the new grid pattern intersects in maddening and complex ways with the surrounding streets and alleys.



The Old City (as the locals call the northeast portion of Egorian) was largely untouched by the building program, though the outer wall has been broken by gates to the point of indefensibility. Architecture has changed as well, with all civic buildings and many noble dwellings being plated with red and black Arcadian marble. The gothic Egorian School style of architecture (which predates the Thrune monarchy by centuries—see page 21) is now used for all new buildings on pain of official disapproval, and even preexisting structures are often renovated, to the extent of painting the plaster on half-timber buildings dark red, to provide a more appropriate color scheme. The Old City is the least compliant in this regard, with locals dragging their feet and using all sorts of bureaucratic loopholes to minimize the impact of the new imperial culture. Consequently the Old City is the least oppressive-looking section of the city, and the most popular with foreigners.

## EGORIAN

**Metropolis** standard (imperial government); **AL** LE

**GP Limit** 16,000 gp

### DEMOGRAPHICS

**Population** 82,100

**Type** mixed (87% human, 9% halfling, 2% tiefling, 2% other)

### AUTHORITY FIGURES

**Aspexia Rugatonn**, head of the Church of Asmodeus in Chelias (female human); **Duxotar Marcellano Ratarion**, commander of the city guard (male human); **Lord Mayor Grachius Alazario**, crown-appointed leader of Egorian (male human); **Paralictor Ivo Elliendo**, senior Hellknight officer of the Order of the Scourge (male human).

## GOVERNMENT AND POLITICS

Egorian is home to the most powerful members of the Chelish nobility. All of the great noble houses have relatives and agents seeded throughout the Mayoral Executive, the city guard, and the imperial bureaucracy headquartered in the city. Generally, high-level executive positions fall to talented members of the lesser houses—House Thrune doesn't deign to do the actual work of governance, and

# CITY OF THORNS

doesn't want any of the other great houses to hold the reins of government. Most of the municipal leadership spends a great deal of time placating the Thrunes and balancing the other great houses against each other while simultaneously trying to actually run the city.

**Duxotar Marcellano Ratarion:** Popular because of his ability to root out corruption in the imperial bureaucracy, Captain Ratarion has the unenviable task of trying to keep the city guard out from under the thumb of the Hellknight Order of the Scourge. Their missions are so similar that the city guard is constantly being pushed out of investigations that Paralictor Ivo Elliendo decides are "Hellknight business."

**Lord Mayor Grachius Alazario:** The mayor is a master of centrist politics. During his 10 years in office he has managed to move the urban renewal campaign forward just fast enough to keep the palace happy while bureaucratically sabotaging enough unpopular projects to keep popular anger in check.

**Most High Aspexia Rugatonn, Grand High Priestess of Asmodeus:** As the leader of the official Chelish religion, Aspexia is powerful enough that none of the non-imperial houses can work against her in any but the most subtle manner.

**Paralictor Ivo Elliendo:** A member of the Order of the Scourge and the local commander of Egorian's Hellknights. A dour and driven man, he brooks little interference in his administration of justice.

## DISTRICTS

Egorian is divided up into districts, both official and unofficial. Most residents use the older, unofficial district designations, of which there are 23. Of these latter, only 11 are described here, with each district bearing its own distinct character.

**Briarpatch:** This middle-class district has embraced the new style of architecture, though its residents lack the finances to make a full conversion. Citizens use red and black paint liberally on even the most unlikely buildings and add spikes and gargoyles to every rooftop, no matter the original style.

**Bridgeside:** The bridge that gave its name to this district is gone now, but the market remains, as do the giant pilings which serve as the anchors for shanties and wharfs.

**Cheapside:** This is actually a generic term for all lower-class portions of the city rather than a specific district. When nobles say "Cheapside," they usually mean anything other than Aspek Garden, Riverside, Sutor's Cross, Thorntown, Thrune Manor, and Thrune Square, though more generous nobles might not call Briarpatch, Triumph, and Parley Circle by this condescending moniker.

**Devil's Dance:** The incidental arrangement of streets into a pentagram makes this a routine haunt of diabolists.

## CITY OF THORNS

Even from its earliest days, Egorian was known as the City of Roses due to the vast fields of red roses that grew on the plains around the town. When Aroden came to Cheliah, one of his miracles was to turn half of the roses in Egorian white. Even when the city overspread most of the old rose-fields, a large garden was maintained to showcase the evidence of Aroden's special favor. The day Aroden died, every white rose in the city turned black. Those still faithful to Aroden claim that when Aroden returns, the roses will be white once more. In the meantime, Egorian is known as the City of Thorns, its black-and-red architecture a subtle mourning or acknowledgement that Aroden no longer watches over the people.

Patriotic young nobles frequent the district's drinking establishments, and wizards and conjurers rent out lofts, hoping the layout will help them with their summoning.

**Dice End:** This district is given over largely to gambling dens and similar entertainment establishments, and a small bribe or a drink bought for the right vagrant can get you an invite into an underground club that doesn't have a Hellknight informant watching.

**Hell Hound Hill:** Climbing up the hill toward Thrune Manor, this district is for the wealthiest of the patriotic nobility. The term "hell hound" is used by the rest of the populace to refer to those citizens who will do anything to get in good with the ruling diabolical regime.

**Longmarket:** Home to Egorian's most eclectic market, Longmarket is a chaotic and noisy place, typified by shops and stalls of all descriptions.

**Mireside:** This quiet residential district is the home of the longshoremen who work the Riverside docks. It is mildly prosperous in an unfashionable sort of way, and "gone Mireside" is used to mean "turned respectable and boring."

**Thorntown:** This wealthy district prominently features Egorian School architecture. The district's skyline looks like nothing so much as a bed of thorns, with narrow spires, towers, minarets, and rooflines all made up of points and vicious-looking gargoyles.

**Trick Alley:** The twists, turns, and tunnels of this district are home to most of Egorian's brothels, bordellos, and flophouses. Anybody living here is probably too poor to live anywhere else.

**Triumph:** This residential district is home to the more patriotic among the middle class. The central square features a giant bronze statue of Queen Abrogail I climbing a stairway of adoring men and devils to attain the throne.

**Whipcrack:** This district houses the Egorian slave market, along with industries and businesses with constant labor needs. About half of the district is filled with halfling-proportioned dwellings of the rudest sort.



# WESTCROWN

Every Chelaxian knows Westcrown's terrible history. Many have parents or grandparents who lived in the city the day Aroden was to come and claim his crown—and instead witnessed an empire's collapse. When the diabolic new rulers of Chelax moved the capital city, they left behind ruin and despair.

Westcrown crumbles under the weight of shattered dreams and thwarted aspirations. Yet even after years of emigration, it remains the largest city in Chelax and one of the largest in Avistan. Westcrown's location ensures its place as a major commercial trade hub, an important military post, and a major port on the western Inner Sea. Boats laden with food or slaves anchor at the floating marinas and ferry their goods to the city's many markets. Trade exports from Westcrown include sea salt, seafood, sun pearls, timber, sailcloth, textiles, wool, wine, olives, herbs, unique crimson pottery, and quality ships.

The city's many religious sites continue to draw the pious, the curious, and the devious. The ruins of the northern city draw interest among those looking for illegal goods or rare treasures from the dangerous rubble. But once the sun sets, only the foolish walk out of doors in Westcrown, for the shadow beasts prowl every darkened lane and waterway.

## HISTORY

Founded as a holy site to Aroden, the city was renamed Westport in 3837 AR after an extended siege by greedy noble families. After the Chelish king Korrado II moved the capital there from Ostenso in 3991, he again changed the name, this time to Westcrown, sparking massive immigration and construction.

Aroden's death incited chaos in the city. Without the mandate of divine rule, many families grabbed for power. The civil wars among Chelish noble families only resolved after 30-some years and more death in Chelax than has ever been recorded. Some said the rise of diabolism came from all the blood spilled, and that the devils simply came along to clean it up. Regardless, the strict order imposed by these forces calmed many after the chaos of a generation. House Thrune used those feelings of relief to its advantage, and before any could question the nobles' diabolical alliances, House Thrune was unstoppable in its power grab for the Imperial Throne.

Her Infernal Majestrix, Queen Abrogail I, wrenched Westcrown's pride away in a heartbeat as she and her bound

devils abandoned the city for her home in Egorian. For nearly 70 years, Westcrown and its people have struggled to recover from these losses. Westcrown has regained some prominence and wealth as Chelax's main trading port, but it remains a pale shadow of what it once was.

## WESTCROWN

**Metropolis** standard (mayor backed by Chelish monarchy); **AL LE GP Limit** 16,000 gp

### DEMOGRAPHICS

**Population** 114,700

**Type** cosmopolitan (88% human, 7% halfling, 5% other races)

### AUTHORITY FIGURES

**Lictor Richemar Almanson**, commander of Citadel Rivad, leader of the Order of the Rack Hellknights (male human); **Lord Mayor Aberian Arvanxi**, mayor of Westcrown, House Arvanxi patriarch (male human); **Vassindio Drovege**, House Drovege patriarch (male human); **Duxotar Iltus Mhartis**, commander of the city guard (male human); **Eirtein Oberigo**, House Oberigo patriarch (male human); **Casarus Vitallain**, harbormaster (male human); General Vourne, commander of the Gemcrown Bay imperial fleets (male human); various other noble house matriarchs and patriarchs.

## GOVERNMENT & POLITICS

There are broad layers of power, politics, and government in Westcrown, and while many are obvious, many more remain obscure until one runs afoul of them.

### THE DOTTARI

The primary forces of law and order in Westcrown are the dottari, the city guards. They all wear Aroden's symbol stenciled in black on a red field, usually on a shield or tabard. Officers wear a reversed mark (red on black) on the upper arm, forearm, or ring (indicating ascending rank). They always travel in squads of seven—six soldiers and one lieutenant. The leader of the dottari is the duxotar, currently the mayor's nephew Iltus Mhartis.

### NOBLE HOUSES

Twelve major noble houses stand as the powers that be in Westcrown, each with several smaller minor noble families beholden to them. Of these 12, it is important to note that House Drovege and House Oberigo cemented their positions by covertly supporting the Thrune Ascension.

# CITY OF TWILIGHT

The other 10 major houses are, in descending order of influence, Salisfer, Grulios, Arvanxi, Julistarc, Dioso, Tilernos, Phandros, Kholiarix, Rosala, and Mezinias.

## THE RIVER EDICTS

The Laws of Travel, also called the River Edicts, are well known by those who ply the waters in and around Westcrown—and finding ways around them has long been a pastime. First, no one (not even imperial troops) can halt the water travel of anyone on the river. Second, no canals can be blocked or closed save by those given authority by the duxotar, officers of the palace warden, or the city's imperial naval commander. Third, unauthorized encroachment of imperial waters (a 50-foot perimeter around any moving imperial craft, or 100 feet for a moored one) is punishable by immediate attack and potential death. Fourth, attacks from shore to craft are allowed only in the defense of city property.

## THE SHADOW BEASTS

These strange creatures first surfaced in 4676 AR. The dottari were unable to deal with the problem, as were mercenaries, so the mayor declared a curfew to keep citizens off the streets; the curfew remains in place over 30 years later. Today, with the dying of each day's light, businesses hurriedly close and respectable homes light lanterns outside their doors. The dottari light pyrahje (man-sized torches) throughout certain major streets in the city and patrol between these islands of light. Taverns and similar establishments maintain sleeping rolls for those who stay after dark, collecting a customary 2 sp fee for boarders soon after twilight. Those forced onto the street after dark typically carry halorans, 7-foot-tall hooked staves hung with bright lanterns, made publicly available along the city's most traveled avenues.

## DISTRICTS

What were once marshy wetlands, mud flats, and tidal islets solidified into today's Westcrown. Untold thousands of tree trunks driven into the mud and rocks formed the city's foundations. Millennia of building and rebuilding led to today's stone-paved streets.

The City of Twilight carves itself up into three distinct paregos ("great regions") used and understood by all the city's residents: the Regicona ("Floating Palace"), Westcrown Island; the Spera ("Hope's Altar"), the still-occupied sections of the city; and the Dospera ("Despair's Altar"), the ruined northern regions of Westcrown. When locals provide directions in the city, though, they split it up into regos (meaning regions or sectors).

**Rego Cader:** What locals call the "Dead Sector" refers to the northern ruins, though older Wiscrani can tell you this used to be Rego Plea (formerly home to house slaves,

servants, and lesser trades). Now, most are squats and partial homes for dens of thieves, or even the lairs of monsters.

**Rego Corna:** "Crown Sector" encompasses the former stronghold of power in Cheliix—the Imperial Court of Cheliix and its attendant holdings and homes.

**Rego Laina:** "Blade Sector," is named for the many nobles, smithies, and armories here.

**Rego Pena:** "Coin Sector" holds the more lucrative trades and many houses of dubious political or monetary standing.

**Rego Sacero:** "Priest Sector" contains more shrines and ecclesiastical real estate (extant or ruined) than five other Chelish cities combined.

**Rego Scripa:** "Scribe Sector" was once the center for the bureaucratic work of the Chelish empire. Now it is mainly cartographers, trade warehouses, and ship-related businesses.

## NOTEWORTHY SITES

The following are some of the better-known and interesting places in the city.

**A. The Korradath:** Once the seat of Imperial Cheliix, this massive fortified castle remains an impressive sight, marred only by poor upkeep. Today, it is still used for offices, temporary lodgings, or neutral meeting places for nobles, rich traders, and ambassadors from far-off ports who need to be impressed or protected from exposure to "the common rabble on shore."

**B. Vaneo Drovege:** This massive three-storied manor, unlike many buildings in Westcrown, gets scrubbed clean by its slaves every Fireday, so its green marble arches and black slate shingles glisten compared to its surroundings.

**C. Vira Oberigo:** This walled estate has been the primary holding of House Oberigo for centuries.

**D. Miratanza:** "The Floating Market" allows island-bound servants to shop for food and goods for their noble masters. Anchored in place, the numerous platforms allow vendors to rent spaces or simply sell directly from their own craft.

**E. The Pleatra:** This slave market is one of the largest building complexes in the sector.

**F. Taranik House:** The Order of the Rack rotates a new complement of Hellknights to the local Paralictor here every other Fireday. The official commander of Taranik House is **Paralictor Gonville Chard** (male human).

**G. Aroden's Rise:** This large hill is now covered with derelict shrines and a giant statue of the dead god.

**H. The Arodennamea:** Standing 90 feet tall from its base atop Aroden's Rise and shaped from massive blocks of white marble, the statue predates recorded history in the region and all other structures in Westcrown.

**I. Qatada Nessudidia:** The largest temple to Asmodeus in Westcrown, the cathedral's crystalline skylight glows a sinister red at all times.



# SOCIAL

**C**heliax has a long history of heroic adventurers accomplishing great deeds, and the Thrune Alliance with Hell has only modified this tradition, not suppressed it. The government continues to churn out historical operas and epic tales that remind the Chelish people of their nation's superiority and the fact that, while most are meant to serve, some are destined to lead. What follows are the typical attitudes that citizens of Cheliax have toward the most common adventuring classes.

**Barbarian:** Cheliax holds little respect for those who find power in rage and brutality. A few tales relegate foreign barbarians to a condescending role of "noble savage" or associate barbarians with demons.

**Bard:** Opera, singing, and acting are worthy of respect, and those who can coax magic from a great performance are true masters of their craft. Many Chelish operas feature playwrights or performers as protagonists.

**Cleric:** Modern Chelaxians admire the strong spirit needed for priesthood, though they are reticent to say so in public regarding any but Asmodean clerics.

**Druid:** Nature-priests are valued for helping to keep the lands fertile, but suspected of having ties to haunted woods and the strange creatures within.

**Fighter:** Cheliax's military keeps the people safe from the armies of Molthune, sea pirates, and other undesirables, while the Hellknights and city guards protect them from criminals. Before the Thrune Ascendancy, most Chelish heroes were written as warriors in operas and epics, though less so in recent decades.

**Monk:** Most Chelaxians think of the art of self-perfection as a foreigner's pursuit. Unarmed combat is generally seen as inferior to traditional Chelish styles of combat, though Isger's Sisters of the Golden Erinyes are changing this.

**Paladin:** Once, paladins of Aroden and Iomedae were the heroes of the greatest Chelish epics. Now they are often depicted as lovable buffoons or misguided souls, as their devotion to these gods did not help Cheliax in its time of crisis.

**Ranger:** Archery of all sorts is a noble art, and many folk tales feature expert rangers as leaders of communities. Those who befriend animals are usually treated like druids.

**Rogue:** Heroic rogues are usually fast-talkers, seducers, and manipulators, while sneaks, cutpurses, and assassins are usually the villains in stories. A quiet rogue is typically considered a dullard, a criminal, or both.

**Sorcerer:** Most laypersons believe sorcerers gain their magic from Hell. They're feared for their diabolical power, yet respected for retaining their humanity (unlike tiefling scum).

**Wizard:** The modern attitude in Cheliax is that wizards are valuable for their ability to bargain with devils and banish demons—both signs of incredible intelligence and determination. Even "hedge wizards" are respected for their presumed knowledge of Hell.

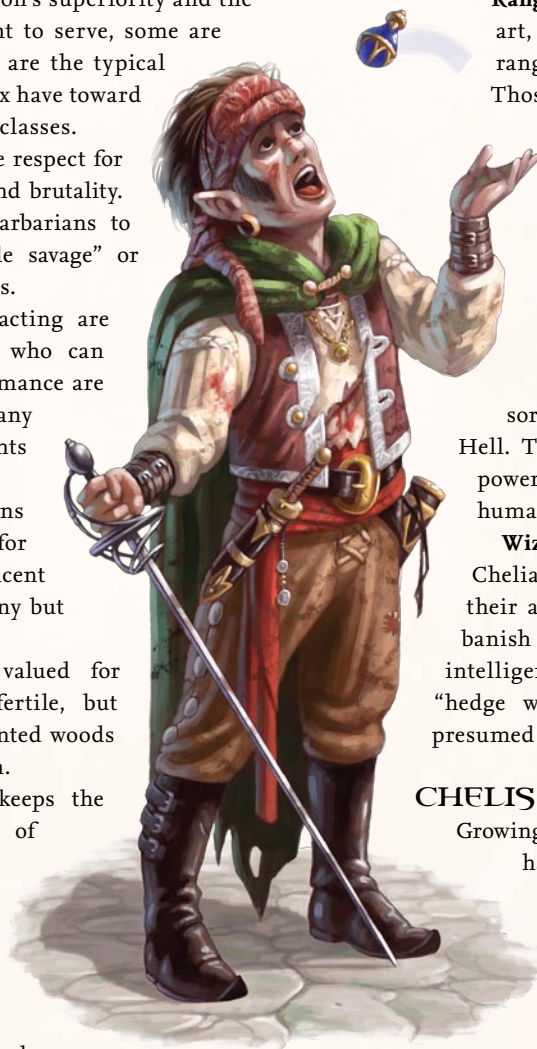
## CHELISH TRAITS

Growing up in a country in league with Hell has its share of quirks, advantages, and flaws. For more information on traits, see the free *Pathfinder Character Traits Web Enhancement* at [paizo.com/traits](http://paizo.com/traits).

### COMBAT TRAITS

These traits are available to all characters, Chelish or otherwise.

**Accelerated Drinker:** You know how to drink a potion efficiently, such as by not using your hands, tossing it in the air and catching it in your mouth, or opening it with your teeth. You may drink a potion as a move action



## ADVENTURERS AND TRAITS

instead of a standard as long as you start your turn with the potion in your hand.

**Threatening Defender:** You know how to avoid a blow while still maintaining your offensive posture. When you use Combat Expertise, reduce the number you subtract from your melee attack rolls by 1.

### MAGIC TRAITS

These regional traits are available to all Chelish characters.

**Desperate Focus:** You've often found yourself in situations where a lack of focus can lead to worse than a lost spell. You gain a +2 trait bonus on concentration checks.

**Diabolical Dabbler:** Each fiendish animal you conjure with any summon spell gains +1 hit point per hit die for the duration of the spell that summoned it.

**Theoretical Magician:** You've studied more magic than what you can actually perform. You gain a +2 trait bonus on Spellcraft checks, or a +3 bonus if you aren't a spellcaster.

### RACE TRAITS

These race traits are available to all characters of the appropriate race.

**Brastlework Businessman** (Gnome): Your time among the Brastlework elite has led to an extensive knowledge of alchemy and ready connections in the trade. You gain a +2 trait bonus on all Craft (alchemy) checks.

**Infernal Influence** (Chelaxian): Your family boasts secret diabolical ties that may go back much further than the Thrune regime, and much deeper. You gain fire resistance 1 and a +1 trait bonus on Fortitude saves against poison.

**Masterful Demeanor** (Chelaxian): As a proud Chelaxian, you are confident that members of other, inferior races will obey you, and quickly. You gain a +3 trait bonus on Intimidate checks against members of non-human humanoid races.

**Successful Shirker** (Halfling): Born and raised a slave with no hope of advancement, you are adept at avoiding your overseer's ire and attention, the better to spend time on your own interests. You gain a +1 trait bonus on Stealth checks and a +3 trait bonus on Bluff and Diplomacy checks to avoid punishment by lawful authority.

### REGIONAL TRAITS

These regional traits are available to all Chelish characters.

**Cliff Jumper** (Cliffs of Fury): You spent your early years exploring and foraging along the coastal cliffs. You gain a +1 trait bonus on Acrobatics and Climb checks, and on Reflex saves to avoid falling.

**Dump Salvager** (Westcrown): You grew up in or around Westcrown's rubbish-strewn shores and spent your spare time digging through trash looking for things worth selling. You gain a +3 trait bonus on Perception checks to search for concealed items.

**Egorian School Apprentice** (Egorian): You studied under one of the masters of the Egorian School style of architecture. You gain a +3 trait bonus on Knowledge (engineering) checks and a +2 trait bonus on Perception checks to find secret doors or traps in buildings built in the Egorian School style.

**Wharf Rat** (Ostenso): You may never have been on a boat larger than a garbage scow, but you've been helping them dock all your life. You gain a +2 trait bonus on skill checks involving climbing and rope use, and a +4 trait bonus on Appraise checks to determine the value of large quantities of bulk goods without opening their containers.

**Whisper Woods Hunter** (Whisper Woods): Your family prepared you for a life of evading or destroying fiendish creatures. You gain a +2 trait bonus on Survival checks to track evil outsiders and a +2 trait bonus on initiative checks when you know your opponent is an evil outsider.

### RELIGION TRAITS

These religion traits are available to all characters of the listed faith.

**Asmodean Demon Hunter** (Asmodeus): Raised in the church of Asmodeus (whether or not you are currently a follower of the Prince of Darkness), you've focused your indoctrinated fervor primarily on the elimination of demons. You gain a +3 trait bonus on Knowledge (planes) checks about demons and a +2 trait bonus on Will saves against mind-affecting spells and effects from demons.

**Patient Optimist** (Desna, Erastil): As a worshiper of a good and kindly god, you know that Asmodeus' dominion over Chelax will pass in time, and are used to having to repeat arguments multiple times to convince even the most stubborn believer. You gain a +2 trait bonus on Diplomacy checks to influence hostile or unfriendly creatures, and if you fail at such an attempt you may retry it once.

### SOCIAL TRAITS

These regional traits are available to all Chelish characters.

**Hellknight Ancestry:** At least one of your parents was a Hellknight, and you see the orders as the embodiment of civic virtue. You gain a +2 trait bonus on Diplomacy checks to influence Hellknights and a +2 trait bonus on Intimidate checks to influence enemies of the Hellknights.

**Lost Nobility:** Your family was prominent before the rise of Thrune, but that legacy is now forgotten by all but you. You hold every Chelish government official (including Hellknights) personally responsible for your lost glory. You gain a +1 trait bonus on attack and damage rolls against these officials.

**Nonchalant Thuggery:** You are adept at keeping witnesses from noticing that anything is wrong. You gain a +4 trait bonus on Bluff checks to keep others from noticing your aggressive actions.



# MAGIC & SPELLS

**A**mong the power players of Cheliah, style counts for almost as much as efficacy. The Chelish nobles, fiendish dabblers, and arcanists continually jostling for power want badly to get to the top, but they also want to look impressive getting there. The following magic items remain in play not only for their abilities, but also for their memorable appearance, or in some cases the effect they lend—such as whipping out a *pact parchment* from a cloak pocket.

## ABROGALIAN CORSET (SPECIFIC ARMOR)

**Aura** moderate enchantment; **CL** 9th

**Slot** armor; **Price** 17,175 gp; **Weight** 10 lbs.

### DESCRIPTION

Devised by Her Infernal Majestrix, Abrogail I, this +3 *studded leather armor* is lavishly adorned with a bound swarm of hellwasps. Once ranking among the most spectacular pieces of clothing in Cheliah, the discomfort caused by during the creation of this corset is as legendary as the protection it offers.

The wasps bound to the corset prevent the first 20 points of damage you take each day (resetting at midnight). Once the wasps have prevented 20 points of damage for the day, they angrily animate and swarm around you, and you must make a DC 18 Fortitude save or be nauseated for 1 round. After 1 round of activity, the swarm then returns to the corset and goes dormant, and this ability to prevent damage does not function until it recovers at midnight.

The swarm cannot be targeted separately from the armor and cannot be killed unless the armor is destroyed (not just broken).

### CONSTRUCTION

**Requirements** Craft Magic Arms and

Armor, *lesser planar ally*, *summon swarm*, caster level 9th; **Cost** 8,675 gp

## CLOAK OF FLASH AND SHADOW

**Aura** minor illusion; **CL** 3rd

**Slot** cloak; **Price** 11,000 gp; **Weight** 1 lb.

### DESCRIPTION

Designed to meet the dual needs of the Chelish elite—glamour and subtlety—the *cloak of flash and shadow* is a magic reversible cloak. When worn one way, the cloak shimmers with heavy gold and silver embroidery against richly colored silk, and grants you a +2 enhancement bonus to Charisma.

When worn inside-out, the matte-black lining seems to absorb light, cloaking you in shadow and giving you a +2 competence bonus on Stealth checks. In this configuration you can cast *blur* three times per day.

Reversing the cloak's position is a standard action and requires at least one free hand.

### CONSTRUCTION

**Requirements** Craft Wondrous Item, *blur*, *eagle's splendor*; **Cost** 5,500 gp

## GRUDGE BLADE (SPECIFIC WEAPON)

**Aura** minor necromancy; **CL** 9th

**Slot** weapon; **Price** 10,320 gp; **Weight** 2 lbs.

### DESCRIPTION

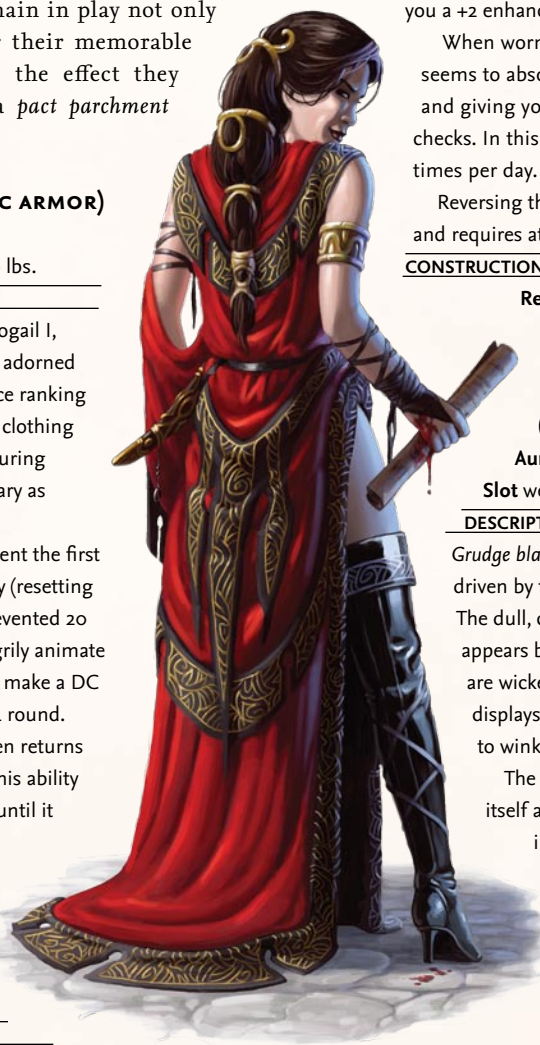
*Grudge blades* play a role in many of the conflicts driven by the diabolical elite, both petty and epic. The dull, dark-gray steel of the blades almost appears blunt on the edges, but these +1 *rapiers* are wickedly sharp. Each elegantly carved hilt displays an engraved, glaring eye that appears to wink and flash as you fight.

The true power of a *grudge blade* reveals itself against an opponent you have already injured with the sword. If you hit a creature with the sword on your previous turn, you gain an extra +1 bonus on damage rolls with the sword against that creature. As long as you continue to hit that creature at least once per round and attack

no other creatures with the *grudge blade*, this damage bonus continues to build, to a maximum of +5; failing to hit that target or attacking anyone else resets the damage bonus to +0.

### CONSTRUCTION

**Requirements** Craft Magic Arms and Armor, *death knell*, *magic weapon*; **Cost** 5,320 gp



# DAZZLING STYLE, LETHAL SUBSTANCE

## HELLCALLER'S EDGE (SPECIFIC WEAPON)

**Aura** moderate evocation; CL 9th

**Slot** weapon; **Price** 20,350 gp; **Weight** 8 lbs.

### DESCRIPTION

Bestowed as rewards for unwavering loyalty to Hellknight paravicans of great renown, these filigreed +2 *greatswords* pulse with a sickening carmine light in rhythm with the heartbeats of their bearers. Prized trophies, these weapons are brandished eagerly by staunch champions of Cheliah.

Once per day as a standard action, you may strike the blade against the ground to create a one-way rift from Phlegethon (the fieriest layer of Hell) centered where the sword hits. The rift spews magical flames upward in a 10-foot-radius, 40-foot-high cylinder. All creatures in this area (including you) take 9d6 points of damage (Reflex half DC 17). Half the damage is fire, but the other half results directly from divine power and is therefore not subject to fire resistance or immunity.

### CONSTRUCTION

**Requirements** Craft Magic Arms and Armor, *flame strike*, caster level 6th; **Cost** 10,350 gp

## PACT PARCHMENT

**Aura** moderate enchantment; CL 11th

**Slot** —; **Price** 3,500 gp; **Weight** —

### DESCRIPTION

Written and signed in blood, a *pact parchment* ensures the utter and undeniable fulfillment of the actions stated within. Upon a pact parchment, you can inscribe a contract, defining a certain service or course of action by one or more creatures. If all listed creatures willingly (without magical influence, threats, and so on) sign this pact in blood, they are bound to fulfill this agreement. Henceforth everyone breaking the pact suffers a –4 penalty on attack rolls, saves, ability checks, and skill checks, until they either satisfy the pact's conditions (if still possible) or the parchment is destroyed.

### CONSTRUCTION

**Requirements** Craft Wondrous Item, *geas/quest*; **Cost** 1,750 gp

## RING OF TERRIBLE COST

**Aura** moderate transmutation; CL 9th

**Slot** ring; **Price** 20,000 gp; **Weight** —

### DESCRIPTION

These rings once displayed the smiling face of King Gaspodar, and were forged in limited quantities to celebrate the end of his reign. After Aroden's death, the rings were cast aside or lost. Recently, several resurfaced, but changed by unknown means—Gaspodar's face now bears a sorrowful expression, and flames loom behind him.

As a standard action, you may charge the ring with a +1 profane bonus by sacrificing 2 of your hit points. These hit points remain lost and cannot be healed by any means until the ring's power is expended. You may do this multiple times, up to a maximum of a

## EGORIAN SCHOOL ARCHITECTURE

The black-and-red gothic look of Egorian's architecture is seen as nearly synonymous with the rule of House Thrune, but the architecture preceded the regime that popularized it across Cheliah. Egorian School architecture, typified by narrow, sharp towers and points, as well as its use of red and black stone, has been around for centuries. Egorian School edifices can be found in many of the great cities of Avistan, though those in Andoran have mostly been resurfaced in lighter colors, a gesture of defiance toward the Thrune regime. The Acadamae in Korvosa and the Gibbous Moon Inn in Oppara are merely two of the most famous examples of Egorian School buildings gracing the skyline of other cities. In the capital city of Cheliah, the Egorian School is mandatory for all new construction.

+5 profane bonus stored in the ring.

As an immediate action, you can add the stored profane bonus to any single attack roll, damage roll, skill check, or saving throw, which expends the charged energy from the ring. You must declare this use after rolling the die but before you learn the result of the roll. You must expend all the ring's power at once. Once the charge is expended, you can heal your lost hit points normally. Expending this charge does not ruin the ring, and you may charge it again by sacrificing more hit points.

The charge in the ring can come from multiple donors, but none of the donors can regain their sacrificed hit points until the ring's charge is spent or the ring is destroyed. For this reason, owners of a *ring of terrible cost* guard the item carefully.

### CONSTRUCTION

**Requirements** Forge Ring, *aid*, *resistance*, *vampiric touch*; **Cost** 10,000 gp

## VERDICT OF THE NETHER COURT

**Aura** strong necromancy CL 13th

**Slot** weapon; **Price** 32,000 gp; **Weight** 2 lbs.

### DESCRIPTION

Infused with the power of Hell's courts, this blood-quenched steel gavel emits an ear-splitting din when struck against a hard surface. Once per day, as a standard action, you can use it to judge a single foe within 30 feet, who then suffers the effect of a *dictum* spell.

The gavel bestows one negative level on any chaotic or good creature attempting to wield it. The negative level remains as long as the weapon is in hand and disappears when the weapon is no longer wielded. This negative level never results in actual level loss, but it cannot be overcome in any way (including restoration spells) while the weapon is wielded. If the creature is chaotic good, these negative levels stack.

### CONSTRUCTION

**Requirements** Craft Wondrous Item, *dictum*; **Cost** 16,000 gp



## spells

While most foreigners assume that all of Cheliah's magic is devoted to bargaining with and summoning devils, the country has a long history of magical traditions predating the royal house's infernal alliance.

### AURA OF THE UNREMARKABLE

**School** enchantment (compulsion) [mind-affecting]; **Level** bard 3, sorcerer/wizard 4

#### CASTING

**Casting Time** 1 full round

**Components** V, S, M (a white feather)

#### EFFECT

**Range** 30 ft.

**Target** non-allied creatures within a 30-ft. emanation

**Duration** 1 minute/level (D) and instantaneous

**Saving Throw** Will negates; **Spell Resistance** Yes

#### DESCRIPTION

An invisible sphere of magic surrounds you, clouding the minds of creatures in the area so they regard even the strangest actions as innocuous. For example, if you and your allies are beating a city guard for information, creatures within the area do not think this is unusual or cause for alarm; if your ally is aiming a crossbow at the queen from a balcony, the affected creatures accept this as normal and unworthy of concern. Any hostile actions by you or your allies against a creature break the effect of the spell for that creature. When the spell ends, observers see things normally but altered perceptions from the earlier events remain. Any mention of the events as noteworthy (such as being questioned about them by an authority figure) allows the target another Will save to break the effect and remember things normally.

### BURNING DISARM

**School** transmutation (fire); **Level** cleric 1, druid 1, sorcerer/wizard 1

#### CASTING

**Casting Time** 1 standard action

**Components** V, S

#### EFFECT

**Range** Short (25 ft. + 5 ft./2 levels)

**Target** Held metal item of one creature or 15 lbs. of unattended metal

**Duration** Instantaneous

**Saving Throw** Reflex negates (object, see text); **Spell Resistance** Yes (object)

#### DESCRIPTION

This spell causes a metal object to instantly become red hot. A creature holding the item may attempt a Reflex save to drop it and take no damage (even if it is not their turn), otherwise the hot metal deals 1d4 points of fire damage per caster level (maximum 5d4). Circumstances that prevent the creature from dropping the item (such as a locked gauntlet) mean the creature

gets no saving throw. The heat does not harm the item, and it does not get hot enough or last long enough to ignite flammable objects. The item cools to its previous temperature almost instantly. If cast underwater, *burning disarm* deals half damage and boils the surrounding water.

### DIRGE OF THE VICTORIOUS KNIGHTS

**School** illusion (shadow); **Level** bard 6

#### CASTING

**Casting Time** 1 full round

**Components** V, S, F (a medal from a dead Hellknight or a copy of a Chelish opera script)

#### EFFECT

**Range** 120 ft.

**Effect** 120-ft. line, 10 ft. wide

**Duration** instantaneous

**Saving Throw** Reflex half; **Spell Resistance** yes

#### DESCRIPTION

By performing part of the Chelish opera *Victory of the Hellknights*, you call forth spectral illusions of mounted Hellknights to trample your foes under the hooves of their glorious steeds. The incorporeal knights appear in your square and ride forward in the direction you indicate, dealing 1d6 points of damage per caster level (maximum 20d6) to all creatures in their path. Half of this damage is cold damage, while half results directly from arcane power and is not subject to cold resistance or immunity. The knights cannot pass through force effects or barriers that block incorporeal creatures or undead.

### DWEOMER RETALIATION

**School** abjuration; **Level** sorcerer/wizard 3

#### CASTING

**Casting Time** 1 immediate action

**Components** V

#### EFFECT

**Range** Long (400 ft. + 40 ft./level)

**Target** one creature you counterspelled since your last turn

**Duration** instantaneous

**Saving Throw** none; **Spell Resistance** yes

#### DESCRIPTION

You may only cast this spell immediately after successfully counterspelling an opponent. Drawing upon the residual energy of the countered spells, you gain a number of temporary hit points equal to the level of the countered spell plus your Charisma or Intelligence modifier (for sorcerers and wizards, respectively); your counterspelled opponent takes damage equal to this amount.

If the countered spell was at least 4th level, you and your opponent make opposed concentration checks. If you beat your opponent by 10 or more, you retain this spell (or its spell slot, if you are a sorcerer) as if you had not cast it.

# DAZZLING STYLE, LETHAL SUBSTANCE

## EMERGENCY FORCE SPHERE

**School** evocation (force); **Level** sorcerer/wizard 4

### CASTING

**Casting Time** 1 immediate action

**Components** V

### EFFECT

**Range** 5 ft.

**Effect** 5-ft.-radius hemisphere of force centered on you

**Duration** 1 round/level (D)

**Saving Throw** None; **Spell Resistance** No

### DESCRIPTION

As *wall of force*, except you create a hemispherical dome of force with hardness 20 and a number of hit points equal to 10 per caster level. The bottom edge of the dome forms a relatively watertight space if you are standing on a reasonably flat surface. The dome shape means that falling debris (such as rocks from a collapsing ceiling) tend to tumble to the side and pile up around the base of the dome. If you make a DC 20 Craft (stonemasonry), Knowledge (engineering), or Profession (architect or engineer) check, the debris is stable enough that it retains its dome-like configuration when the spell ends, otherwise it collapses. Normally this spell is used to buy time for dealing with avalanches, floods, and rockslides, though it is also handy in dealing with ambushes.

## SIGNIFER'S RALLY

**School** conjuration (teleportation)

[evil]; **Level** cleric 7, sorcerer/wizard 7

### CASTING

**Casting Time** 1 standard action

**Components** V, S, M (100 gp worth of bloodstone for every ally teleported)

### EFFECT

**Range** medium (100 ft. + 10 ft./level)

**Target** one willing ally/5 levels

**Duration** instantaneous

**Saving Throw** Will negates (harmless); **Spell Resistance** yes (harmless)

### DESCRIPTION

You teleport up to one ally per five caster levels to your location. You determine which allies you want to teleport at the time of

casting; these allies have 1 round to decide to allow or refuse your spell, and they teleport immediately upon accepting. Allies are teleported as if you had cast *teleport* on them (your current location is at least "studied carefully" for this purpose), appearing in a puff of brimstone in a space adjacent to you. If you are in combat and your allies were not, your allies may roll initiative upon arrival but are not considered flat-footed even though they have not taken any actions. The spell does not function in areas warded against intrusion by evil creatures (such as a *magic circle against evil* effect).

## TWINE DOUBLE

**School** illusion (shadow); **Level** sorcerer/wizard 3

### CASTING

**Casting Time** 10 minutes

**Components** V, S, M (cloth and twine)

### EFFECT

**Range** 0 ft.

**Effect** One duplicate creature

**Duration** 1 minute/level (D)

**Saving Throw** None;

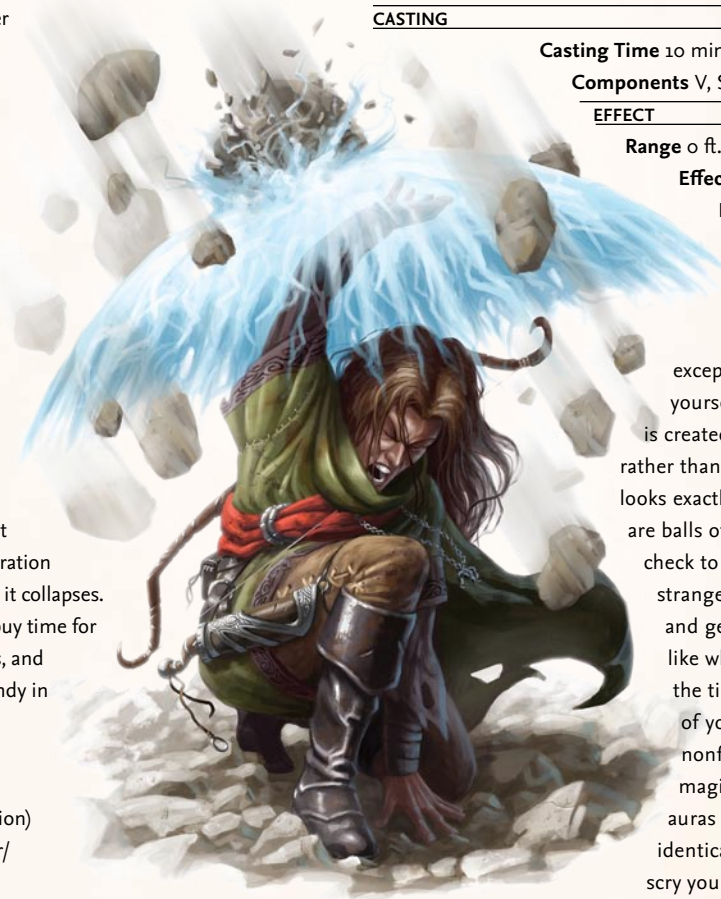
**Spell Resistance** No

### DESCRIPTION

As *simulacrum*,

except you can only duplicate yourself, and the duplicate is created from cloth and twine rather than ice and snow. The double looks exactly like you except its eyes are balls of twine (DC 10 Perception check to recognize double's strange eyes). It wears clothing and gear that appear exactly like what you are wearing at the time of casting. Its copies of your magic items are nonfunctional but radiate magic and have the same auras as your items. Its aura is identical to yours. Attempts to scry you while the double exists have a 50% chance of targeting the double instead of you.

The double cannot attack, has no special abilities, and has a +0 bonus on all saves and checks. You may verbally give the double orders as a free action, or control it telepathically as a standard action. You know what the double is experiencing, and when controlling it telepathically you can see and hear everything it sees and hears, though events at your location may drown out the sensory inputs from the double. The double has hit points equal to half your hit points at the time of casting. If brought to 0 hit points, it is destroyed, reverting to cloth and twine. The double is an animated object.





# RELIGION

From outside Cheliah, it appears that the dominant facet of life in this country is the worship of Hell, and all the excesses it represents. To a citizen, however, the picture is markedly different. True, the yoke of Asmodeus lies across the necks of the citizenry, but the burden is not actually so great as one might imagine.

A great difference between the aristocracy and the commoners is the worship of Asmodeus. The commoners pay lip service to the Lord of Hell; they celebrate the sacred days and keep the mandatory shrines in their homes, but most of them quietly hold to the worship of other gods.

The aristocracy must set an example, though, and so often try to outdo each other in their displays of devotion. Most of them see the worship of Asmodeus as a tool, a way to justify their lifestyles and the tyrannical treatment of their subjects, and few consider the longer-lasting ramifications of their worship. What they do see is that those who fail to show enough enthusiasm watch their political fortunes dwindle, and sometimes disappear altogether. Thus, the noble families build their private chapels and hold regular services, always expecting to see the Inquisitors come to audit their devotion. Some among the aristocracy treat it as a game of who can commit the most outrageous acts without tarnishing their souls completely, others are deadly serious, but all of them participate.

The citizens of Cheliah are not all evil. Many of them, in fact, have hearts as great as any on Golarion. How is it, then, that they reconcile the worship of Asmodeus with the essential goodness of their spirits?

## FEIGNING CELEBRATION

There are certain philosophies of goodness that allow no compromise. These sects believe it impossible for Chelaxians to remain pure and free from the taint of Hell, their souls all destined for utter damnation. This is false.

In a world with many gods, appeasing one of them in the heart of its secular power cannot properly be called worship. When forced into chapels, services, and observations, the truly upright among the Chelaxians still bow their heads and bend their knees, still open their mouths for prayers to Asmodeus—but while they acknowledge his power in this place, they grant him no dominion in their hearts. It is not expedience or apathy that guides them: it is the instinct of self-preservation, and only the most narrow-minded would judge them for it.

Others among the Chelaxians find no conflict in worshiping an admittedly evil god.

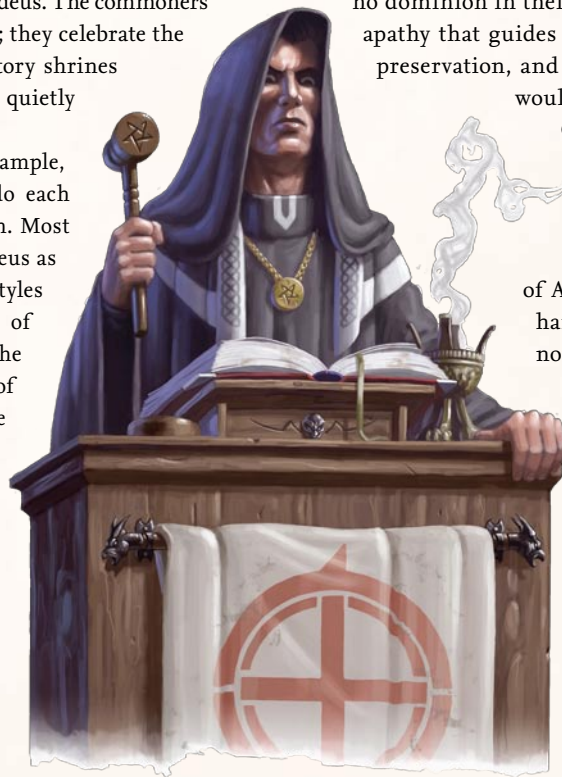
They have grown up with the teachings of the Church of Asmodeus all their life, yet they harbor no cruelty in their hearts, nor do they burn with ambition, rage, or pride. As with so many religions, people follow this god by choosing the teachings they heed, and ignoring the ones they find inconvenient.

Indeed, as the Hellknights would attest, there is much to admire in the teachings of Hell: efficiency, order, hierarchy, knowing one's place in the world, cleansing uncertainty and chaos—these are all aspects of life

lost with the disappearance of Aroden, and the rise of Asmodeus fills a hole many good Chelaxians barely realized was there.

## CELEBRATING HELL

Some expect the worship of Asmodeus to be an extravagant affair, full of orgies, bloodshed, and the sacrifices of innocents. Grimmer celebrants scoff at these juvenile theatrics, calling them the external echoes of an immature faith. What both of them fail to recognize is that there are many paths to Hell, many ways to reach the Pit, and that its infernal gravity calls to each in a separate voice.



# A TOLERANT PRISON

## THE SACRED TEXTS

The Courts of Hell produce libraries of books, and the printing presses of Cheliasx emulate them in many ways. The most crucial to the worship of Asmodeus is his sacred text, the *Asmodean Monograph*. The earthly version is a mere 1,000 pages, and its supplemental texts number in the hundreds—each focusing on explicating a greater truth, adding codicils and caveats, or filling in lacunae in the original text. These volumes, alone of all books in Cheliasx, are immutable by human hand; changes come from the heart of Hell or not at all.

In the cathedrals of the land, the priests dress in their red and black and choose the direction of their flocks. The texts they may choose to teach from are limited, and so these priests must take direction from the central church in Egorian, and must also please the aristocrats who are their lords. Though church and state work hand-in-hand, local needs present themselves with greater urgency—which is to say the local lords occasionally coerce the priests into offering sermons that bolster the lords' secular power.

## THE UNHOLY DAYS

There are seven major Chelaxian festivals, mandatory events originating from the capital's bureaucracy.

**Equinoxes and Solstices:** Four times a year, on the equinoxes and the solstices, come the Dies Irae, or Days of Wrath. These are the days when bloodsports move from the slums and ghettos into the stadiums of the cities. Slaves and servants of any master may choose to enter the arena to test their mettle against each other, one on one in bloody battles to the death. No master or mistress may forbid the slave from entering. Free men and women of all castes and classes are free to enter as well, to fight and kill without censure or penalty—although, if they die, their families are obliged to pay burial and clean-up expenses. The entrants fight in rounds and waves, eliminating an opponent in each round, until at last one stands alone. The winner is granted freedom from slavery or servitude, erasure of all debts, and a purse of gold.

The Winter Solstice sees the culmination of the Dies Irae, with all the winners of the three previous bouts summoned to Egorian and made to fight to the death for the amusement of the nobles. The winner joins their ranks, given a title of baronet and a plot of land.

**Calistril 19, Loyalty Day:** This honors the Treaty of Egorian, in which the House of Thrune solidified its control over Cheliasx. This is a feast day, and the local governments and Asmodean churches provide a repast that fills every stomach to bursting. It is a day of gluttony, to remind the populace of the bounty their government provides.

**Rova, Second Oathday, Signing Day:** This is a day of pride in Cheliasx and Isger—as well as in Andoran and Galt, though few in those lands speak of it. It honors the day that Cheliasx, Andoran, Galt, and Isger agreed to a mutual defense pact and threw off the shackles of the tyrants of Taldor. Observances vary, but most involve huge pyrotechnic displays, feats of strength, and public debates to allow opponents to show off their speaking and rhetorical skills.

**Neth 14, Even-Tongued Day:** This is a day of remembrance of the conquest of Asper the Even-Tongued, who brought Andoran, Galt, and Isger under Chelish control. Once it was a day of celebration, but it's now a day of mourning for the lost glories of Cheliasx, and a dark promise that the treacherous allies will be brought into the fold again by word or by sword. Citizens wear black on this day, public speaking is forbidden, and old feuds are brought to memory again, burnished and sharpened—and sometimes brought to sudden and terrible ends.

## OTHER RELIGIONS

Outsiders often express surprise at the tolerance shown to other religions, even those of good-aligned gods, and expect that this is another infernal ruse designed to lure good worshipers into the open and then crush them, as Egorian crushes all dissent. But no—Chelaxians are invited to offer their praise to other gods as well, so long as they abide by a few strictures: First, they must not speak against Asmodeus, nor against his priestly hierarchy or followers. They must not speak against the aristocracy, nor encourage dissent. They must abide by the laws of Cheliasx. They must live quietly, and avoid drawing attention to themselves. Finally, the ranking priests of the faith must register themselves, and keep records of all priests within the country.

Other rules exist, naturally, in such profusion that it is clear an Inquisitor seeking to charge a priest could find an excuse close at hand. Thus, seen in this way, the tolerance on which the Chelaxians so pride themselves could be interpreted as merely a wave toward an ideal the country sees in itself. That is, in theory these religions can find a home here; in practice, they are forced into strictures that grip faith by the throat.

Priests of Abadar act as judges in remote villages and towns where the strength of Egorian is thin. Erastil's worship is strong near the Barrowood and Whisper Woods. Iomedae, who was originally Chelaxian, enjoys a remarkable popularity among the people of the north and east, and many of the Hellknights there venerate her above all others. Sarenrae's worshipers are rare but welcome, for Asmodeans have not forgotten her work in imprisoning Rovagug.

Some faiths, however, are forbidden upon pain of torture and execution. These include the worship of any god of chaos or any demon or devil other than Asmodeus.



# COMBAT

In the darkened streets of Egorian, muggers and assassins target their victims with Hellcat Pounces. Hired mercenaries defend their charges with fierce Cornugon Smashes. Spies protect themselves with Osluth Guile, and seductresses and informants make use of Fury's Fall when in need of a quick getaway. It's no surprise that many of the special tactics and combat tricks designed by Chelaxians mimic the abilities of actual devils, such as the hamatulatsu style first taught in Isger (see page 83 in the *Pathfinder Chronicles Campaign Setting*). Sometimes these practices migrate to other areas, carried away by travelers or exiles, but they usually lose their infernal names outside of Chelias.

## BELIER'S BITE [COMBAT]

Your unarmed strikes cause your opponent to bleed.

**Prerequisites:** Improved Unarmed Strike.

**Benefit:** When you damage an opponent with an unarmed strike, you deal an extra 1d4 bleed damage.

**Special:** This ability does not stack with other special abilities, attacks, or items that allow you to deal bleed damage.

The belier devil appears in *Pathfinder Adventure Path* volume #12.

## CORNUGON SHIELD [COMBAT]

You can use your spiked chain as both armor and weapon.

**Prerequisites:** Dex 15, Weapon Focus (spiked chain).

**Benefit:** When wielding a spiked chain, you gain a +1 shield bonus to your AC. When you are fighting defensively or using the total defense action, this shield bonus increases to +2.

## CORNUGON SMASH [COMBAT]

Your terrible attacks strike fear into your enemies.

**Prerequisites:** Power Attack, Intimidate 6 ranks.

**Benefit:** When you damage an opponent with a Power Attack, you may make an immediate Intimidate check as a free action to attempt to demoralize your opponent.

## CORNUGON STUN [COMBAT]

You are able to make stunning attacks with special monk weapons.

**Prerequisites:** Stunning Fist.

**Benefit:** You may use Stunning Fist when making melee attacks with special monk weapons as well as when making unarmed attacks.

**Normal:** You can only use Stunning Fist when making an attack with an unarmed strike.

## CORNUGON TRIP [COMBAT]

You can throw your spiked chain to make trip attacks.

**Prerequisites:** Dex 15, Improved Trip, Weapon Focus (spiked chain).

**Benefit:** You may throw your spiked chain (as if it were a thrown weapon with a range increment of 10 feet) and can make trip attacks when throwing it. Failing at this attack does not knock you prone.

## FURY'S FALL [COMBAT]

You can use strength and agility to send foes crashing to the ground.

**Prerequisites:** Improved Trip.

**Benefit:** When making a trip attack, add your Dexterity bonus to your CMB.

## FURY'S SNARE [COMBAT]

You entangle your foe in your weapon.

**Prerequisites:** Fury's Fall, Improved Trip.

**Benefit:** If you successfully use a whip to trip a foe, you can choose to drop your whip. Your tripped target gains the entangled condition. The target can break free of the whip by making a DC 10 Strength check or a DC



## FIGHT LIKE A DEVIL

### COMBAT SLANG

Much Chelish slang refers to devils or devilish activities. Other terms evoke images of nobility, or have no clear etymology whatsoever. Here are a list of commonly used Chelish slang terms regarding combat and weapons.

**Barbs:** Armor spikes.

**Binding Contract:** A tanglefoot bag.

**Claw:** A scimitar; a bladed weapon larger than a dagger.

**Double-Cross:** An attack made from a flanking position.

**Dealbreaker:** A good-aligned weapon.

**Devil's Blood:** Alchemist's fire; whiskey.

**Fang:** A dagger.

**Favor:** A healing spell; to "do a favor" means to cast a healing spell in combat. Some clerics of Asmodeus take the term literally, and expect compensation after the battle.

**Formal Introduction:** An attack made in a surprise round; an ambush.

**Lemure:** An outclassed opponent; one who poses no threat.

**Long Arm:** A spiked chain.

15 Escape Artist check (add the enhancement bonus of the whip to these DCs), or by using a full-round action to disentangle himself. Escaping the whip by making a Strength check means the whip gains the broken condition. If the whip has a magical quality such as *flaming*, apply this quality's damage to the target every round on your turn.

### HAMATULA GRASP [COMBAT]

You deal terrible damage to impaled foes.

**Prerequisites:** Hamatula Strike, Improved Grapple, Strength 13, base attack bonus +9.

**Benefit:** When attacking an impaled opponent (see Hamatula Strike) with the weapon that impales them, you only suffer a -2 penalty to your grapple check. If the check succeeds, you deal an extra 1d6 damage.

### HAMATULA STRIKE [COMBAT]

You can catch your opponents on your weapon and hold them in place.

**Prerequisites:** Improved Grapple, Strength 13, Base Attack Bonus +7.

**Benefit:** Whenever you damage an opponent with a piercing weapon, you can immediately make a grapple check; success means the opponent is impaled on your weapon and you both gain the grappled condition. While the opponent is impaled, as an attack action you may make a grapple check on your turn at a -4 penalty to damage the opponent with your weapon, even if your weapon cannot normally be used in a grapple.

### EXOTIC WEAPON: BARBAZU BEARD

**Cost** 25 gp; **Dmg (S)** 1d3; **Dmg (M)** 1d4; **Critical** x2; **Range Increment** —; **Weight** 5 lbs.; **Type** Slashing

Popular in Egorian but rarely seen elsewhere, a barbazu beard is an intimidating helm with a full facemask wrought to look like a snarling barbazu's head. Extending from the chin area of the face guard is a razor-sharp blade much like an actual barbazu's beard, usually 8 inches long but sometimes longer. A barbazu beard can be used as an off-hand weapon that requires no hands to use; thus, a warrior could combine use of a barbazu beard with a two-handed weapon. It otherwise follows all rules for using an off-hand weapon. Attacking with a barbazu beard provokes an attack of opportunity. Because it is so close to the wearer's face, using a barbazu beard against creatures harmful to touch (such as fire elementals and acidic oozes) has the same risks as using a natural weapon or unarmed strike against these creatures.

A barbazu beard is a light melee exotic weapon.

**Normal:** You can only attack with an unarmed strike, natural weapon, or light weapon against opponents you are grappling.

### HELLCAT POUNCE [COMBAT]

You attack unsuspecting foes twice.

**Prerequisites:** Hellcat Stealth, Skill Focus (Stealth), sneak attack +2d6.

**Benefit:** Whenever you attack and damage an opponent in the surprise round, you may immediately make a second attack against the same opponent using the same attack bonus. The target is not considered flat-footed against this second attack.

**Special:** This ability only functions when carrying a light load or less.

### HELLCAT STEALTH

You are difficult to see in the light.

**Prerequisites:** Skill Focus (Stealth), Stealth 6 ranks.

**Benefit:** You may make Stealth checks in normal or bright light even when observed, but at a -10 penalty.

**Normal:** You cannot make Stealth checks while observed.

### OSYLUTH GUILF [COMBAT]

You are skilled at misdirecting an opponent's attacks.

**Prerequisites:** Bluff 8 ranks, Dodge.

**Benefit:** While you are fighting defensively or using the total defense action, select one opponent. Add your Charisma bonus to your AC as a dodge bonus against that opponent's melee attacks until your next turn. You cannot use this feat if you cannot see the selected opponent.



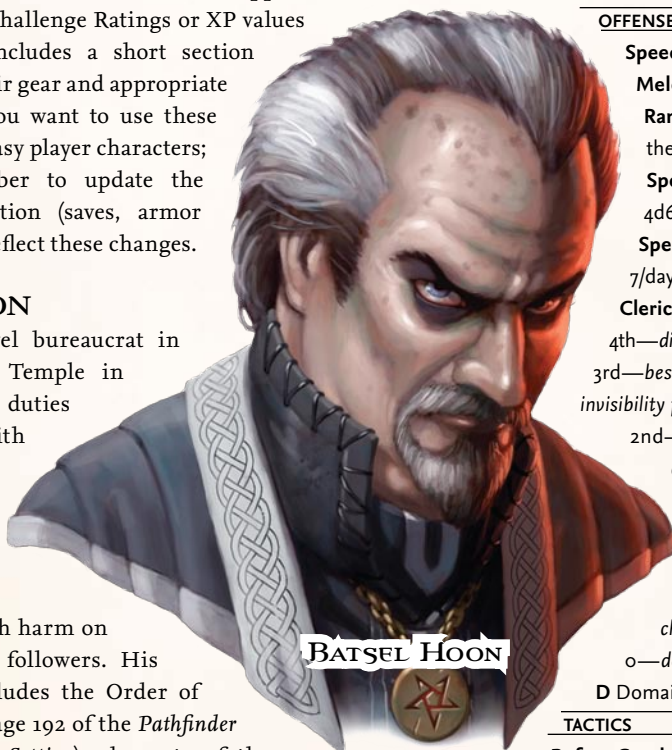
# PERSONA

Cheliah can be a dangerous place, and even the most canny local can always use a friend to watch his back. These four characters are presented as sample Chelish citizens. With your GM's permission, you could hire them to help with a difficult adventure or select them as cohorts with the Leadership feat. Alternatively, your GM may introduce them as local contacts. Because they're intended to be allies rather than opponents, none of them have Challenge Ratings or XP values listed. Each also includes a short section about upgrading their gear and appropriate character traits if you want to use these NPCs as quick and easy player characters; if you do, remember to update the characters' information (saves, armor class, and so on) to reflect these changes.

## BATSEL HOON

Batsel is a mid-level bureaucrat in Asmodeus's Grand Temple in Egorian. While his duties have nothing to do with uncovering threats to the faith, he has become obsessed with finding groups and individuals who wish harm on Asmodeus and his followers. His list of suspects includes the Order of the God Claw (see page 192 of the *Pathfinder Chronicles Campaign Setting*), elements of the Chelish nobility, and many foreign groups. Speculations about conspiracies fill up almost all of Batsel's spare time, and his private apartments are full of charts, bits of loose paper, books, and pieces of string connecting them. He's learned to play things close to his vestments—his warnings to his superiors have thus far fallen on suspiciously deaf ears.

Batsel Hoon is slightly overweight and going bald. At 50, his hair (what's left of it) has gone salt and pepper. Meticulous in his grooming and in all other aspects of his life, he can often be seen fussing with his vestments to arrange them just so, even while in the midst of an important meeting or task.



## BATSEL HOON

Male human cleric of Asmodeus 7

LN Medium humanoid (human)

Init +0; Senses Perception +7

### DEFENSE

AC 14, touch 10, flat-footed 14 (+4 armor)

hp 38 (7d8+7)

Fort +6, Ref +2, Will +9

### OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

**Melee** mwk heavy mace +6 (1d8)

**Ranged** mwk heavy mace (with hand of the acolyte) +10 (1d6)

**Special Attacks** channel energy (negative, 4d6, DC 15, 5/day)

### Spell-Like Abilities

7/day—hand of the acolyte, touch of law

**Cleric Spells Prepared** (CL 7th)

4th—*discern lies* (DC 18), *order's wrath*<sup>D</sup>, *sending*

3rd—*bestow curse* (DC 17), *dispel magic*<sup>D</sup>, *invisibility purge*, *searing light*

2nd—*align weapon*<sup>D</sup> (law only), *augury*, *cure moderate wounds*, *hold person* (DC 16), *silence*

1st—*comprehend languages*, *cure light wounds*, *detect chaos*, *obscuring mist*, *protection from chaos*<sup>D</sup>, *sanctuary* (DC 15)

0—*detect poison*, *light*, *mending*, *read magic*

**D Domain spell. Domains** Law, Magic

### TACTICS

**Before Combat** Batsel uses *obscuring mist* to help hide him from enemies.

**During Combat** Batsel casts *searing light* to show he is dangerous and *bestow curse* to debilitate an enemy, then converts his other spells to inflict damage if he wants to deal damage.

**Morale** Batsel flees if outnumbered or at risk of death.

### STATISTICS

Str 10, Dex 10, Con 12, Int 13, Wis 18, Cha 14

Base Atk +5; CMB +5; CMD 15

**Feats** Alertness, Alignment Channel (law), Combat Casting, Persuasive, Selective Channeling

**Skills** Heal +8, Knowledge (history) +5, Knowledge (local) +3, Knowledge (planes) +11, Knowledge (religion) +11, Perception +7, Profession (librarian) +8, Profession (scribe) +8, Sense

## ALLIES, COHORTS, AND CONTACTS

Motive +16, Spellcraft +11  
**Languages** Common, Draconic, Infernal  
**SQ** spontaneous casting (inflict)  
**Combat Gear** *elixir of hiding*, masterwork heavy mace, *scroll of summon monster II*, *wand of cure light wounds* (10 charges), 150 gp; **Other Gear** *headband of inspired wisdom* +2, chain shirt  
**PC Gear** Replace his chain shirt with a +2 *chain shirt* and his masterwork heavy mace with a +1 *heavy mace*; add an *amulet of natural armor* +1, a +1 *cloak of resistance*, a *pearl of power* (2nd level spell), a +1 *ring of deflection*, and 250 gp; **Suggested Traits** Hellknight Ancestry, Masterful Demeanor

### JEMET WINDERBOLE

Jemet has spent his entire life as a slave—at least on paper. He lives with his master, the aged patriarch of a noble family living in a manor east of Westcrown. His quick wits and the senility of his master allow him to sneak away, sometimes for a week at a time, during which time he does his best to impede the workings of the empire, usually in small and whimsical ways. Jemet isn't very ambitious, but he is passionate about striking back against Cheliah. If the opportunity presents itself, Jemet may be willing to give up the protection of anonymity and dive into rebellion with both feet.

Jemet is 25 years old and has kept his body in prime physical condition, performing his physically taxing chores with gusto, even while avoiding most of the others. He can often be found juggling or walking on his hands. His ready smile and penchant for flattery make him popular with every halfling woman he meets, and even less-prejudiced human women can fall for his charming antics. He's often used the good graces of the female house servants to escape detection or punishment.

### JEMET WINDERBOLE

Male halfling rogue 7  
 CG Small humanoid (halfling)  
**Init** +4; **Senses** Perception +13

#### DEFENSE

**AC** 20, touch 16, flat-footed 15 (+4 armor, +4 Dex, +1 dodge, +1 size); uncanny dodge, +1 vs. traps  
**hp** 38 (7d8+7)



JEMET WINDERBOLE

**Fort** +3, **Ref** +10, **Will** +4; evasion, +2 vs. fear, +1 vs. traps

#### OFFENSE

**Speed** 20 ft.  
**Melee** +1 *dagger* +6 (1d3–1)  
**Ranged** light crossbow +10 (1d6)  
**Special Attacks** sneak attack +4d6

#### TACTICS

**Before Combat** Jemet attacks from ambush or if he has superior numbers on his side. Before combat he places himself where he can get at least one sneak attack in before he's spotted.

**During Combat** Jemet fights cautiously, using Combat Expertise and feinting or flanking each round to use his sneak attack.

**Morale** If Jemet falls below 10 hit points and victory isn't imminent, he flees to fight another day.

#### STATISTICS

**Str** 6, **Dex** 18, **Con** 10, **Int** 13, **Wis** 12, **Cha** 16

**Base Atk** +5; **CMB** +2; **CMD** 17

**Feats** Combat Expertise, Dodge, Improved Feint, Weapon Finesse

**Skills** Acrobatics +16, Bluff +13, Climb +10, Escape Artist +14, Knowledge (local) +11, Perception +13, Sense Motive +11, Sleight of Hand +14, Stealth +23

**Languages** Common, Gnome, Halfling

**SQ** fast stealth, trapfinding, trap sense +2, slow reactions, stand up, uncanny dodge

**Combat Gear** +1 *dagger*, light crossbow, bolts (10), *potion of cure light wounds*; **Other**

**Gear** masterwork studded leather, *cloak of elvenkind*, 39 gp

**PC Gear** Replace his masterwork armor with +1 *studded leather*; add a *belt of dexterity* +2, *boots of striding and springing*, a *hand of the mage*, a *handy haversack*, a *hat of disguise*, *potions of cure moderate wounds* (2), a *ring of protection* +2, and 600 gp; **Suggested Traits** Dump

Salvager, Successful Shirker

### NICKLOD STARWEATHER

Nicklod is the last of a once powerful Chelish noble line. The Starweathers long ago fell out of favor with the Thrunes and their allies, and all Nicklod inherited was a crumbling mansion among the haunted streets of the old city, which he can't visit because the dottari don't allow anyone in that part of town. Already a noted scholar of devil anatomy, Nicklod has recently been doing more direct summoning on his own. He has an imp familiar whose advice has always been good so far,



#

## ALLIES, COHORTS, AND CONTACTS

**Feats** Dodge, Weapon Finesse

**Skills** Acrobatics +9, Bluff +8, Fly +21, Knowledge (arcana) +7, Knowledge (planes) +7, Perception +7, Spellcraft +7

**Languages** Common, Infernal

**SQ** alternate form (*beast shape I*, boar, giant spider, rat, or raven), deliver touch spells, empathic link, share spells, speak with master

### SPECIAL ABILITIES

**Poison (Ex)** sting—injury, *save* Fort DC 13, *frequency* 1/round for 5 minutes, *effect* 1d2 Dex, *cure* 1 save. The save DC is Constitution-based, and includes a +2 racial bonus.

### PONTIA RUNARIO

Pontia has risen quickly in the Order of the Scourge, where she has specialized in apprehending dangerous criminals, including murderers, high-ranking guild thieves, kidnappers, and slaving operations running outside the law. She often investigates the suspects herself, and has developed a sophisticated network of informants in her home city, with a few others elsewhere. If the Order's common informants don't stumble onto the evidence she's discovered, she'll usually have her own contacts nudge the Order's informants in the right direction. As far as the Order is concerned, Pontia is strictly an enforcer, not an investigator, and she doesn't see any need to divest them of that notion, especially since she's found that one of her Hellknights superiors is not quite as disciplined as has been supposed, which she wouldn't have discovered if he had any suspicion of her talents for analysis.

Pontia is a slightly heavyset and physically powerful woman. She's a mixture of Chelaxian, Taldan and Varisian, with somewhat darker skin than is usually seen in the Chelish heartland. The Varisian part of her heritage shows in her wavy black hair and her generous smile (though she displays it only rarely). Pontia spends most of her time in her armor—she wants to be ready for combat at any time, and it deters cutpurses and others who might otherwise prey on a lone traveler on the street.



### PONTIA RUNARIO

Female human fighter 7

LN Medium humanoid (human)

**Init** +4; **Senses** Perception +9

### DEFENSE

**AC** 19, touch 10, flat-footed 19 (+9 armor)

**hp** 38 (7d10)

**Fort** +5, **Ref** +2, **Will** +4; +2 vs. fear

### OFFENSE

**Speed** 30 ft.

**Melee** +1 *longsword* +14 (1d8+7/19–20)

**Ranged** light crossbow +7 (1d8)

### TACTICS

**Before Combat** Pontia doesn't enter combat unless she expects to win, as she believes her knowledge of the situation is usually too valuable to risk. If she can't easily overpower her opponents or they are likely to slip away forever, she waits for backup before starting a fight.

**During Combat** If playing for time, Pontia uses Combat Expertise. If her opponents are lightly armored, she uses Power Attack and Cleave to finish the fight as quickly as possible.

**Morale** Pontia retreats if brought under 20 hit points or if circumstances change so that she no longer believes she's going to win.

### STATISTICS

**Str** 16, **Dex** 10, **Con** 10, **Int** 14, **Wis** 14, **Cha** 12

**Base Atk** +7; **CMB** +10; **CMD** 20

**Feats** Cleave, Combat Expertise, Cornugon Smash, Improved Critical (longsword), Improved Disarm, Improved Initiative, Power Attack,

Weapon Focus (longsword), Weapon Specialization (longsword)

**Skills** Diplomacy +7, Intimidate +11, Knowledge (local) +9, Knowledge (planes) +3, Perception +9, Sense Motive +9

**Languages** Common, Infernal

**SQ** armor training 2, bravery +2, weapon training (heavy blades +1)

**Combat Gear** +1 *longsword*, *potion of cure light wounds*; **Other Gear** +1 *full plate*, 49 gp

**PC Gear** Replace her armor with +2 *full plate* and sword with a +2 *longsword*. Add a *belt of physical might* (Strength and Dexterity +2), a *cloak of resistance* +1, *potions of cure moderate wounds* (2), +1 *bolts* (10), *elixirs of truth* (3), a *potion of delay poison*, a *potion of disguise self*, and 490 gp; **Suggested Traits** Egorian School Apprentice, Threatening Defender



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# In League With Hell



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Printed in China. PZO9407

US \$10.99

ISBN 978-1-60125-191-6



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